



Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) Agenda

Thursday, February 27, 2025, 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Waterloo City Hall - Erb Room - Hybrid

City of Waterloo

100 Regina Street South, Waterloo, ON N2J 4P9

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee shall assist the participating municipalities in fulfilling the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by providing vision and advice regarding the removal of barriers.

People interested in participating in this meeting can email Administrative Coordinator, Janis McKenzie at Janis.McKenzie@kitchener.ca. Please refer to the delegation section on the agenda below for the registration deadline. Written comments received will be circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and will form part of the public record.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. If you require assistance to take part in a city meeting or event, please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994

Coordinating Municipality - Kitchener

Co-Chairs - Tamara Cooper, Alyssa Clelland

Pages

1. Commencement

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging the land on which we gather today, recognizing that the land in which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnawbe and Chonnonton peoples. We would also like to acknowledge the enduring knowledge, presence and deep-rooted traditions of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit who continue to enrich our community to this day.

2. Minutes for Approval

3. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interests

Members of Council and members of the City's local boards/committees are required to file a written statement when they have a conflict of interest. If a conflict is declared, please visit www.kitchener.ca/conflict to submit your written form.

4. Delegations

Pursuant to Council's Procedural By-law, delegations are permitted to address the Committee for a maximum of five (5) minutes. All Delegations must register by 10:00 a.m. on February 27th, 2025 in order to participate in the meeting.

5. Discussion

5.1 Roll Call - Introductions

5.2 Approval of Committee Minutes

5.3 Committee Elections 15 m

Ashley Good, Clerk, North Dumfries will lead the election process.

Co-Chair (two positions)

Built Environment Chair

5.4 City of Kitchener - 2022 Post Election 20 m 3 Accessibility Plan and Considerations for 2026

Amanda Fusco, Director of Legislated Services/City Clerk, City of Kitchener will provide a 15 minute discussion on this matter.

5.5 Region of Waterloo - Reviewing the Region's 20 m 12 Taxi By-Law

Nora Emtesali, Policy and Program Advisor and Thomas Hudacin, Manager, Licensing and Enforcement Services will provide a 15 minute discussion on this matter.

6. Recess and Reconvene

7. Discussion Items (Cont'd)

7.1 Annual Accessibility Update - Wilmot Township 5 m 18 Kaitlin Bos, Clerk, will provide a 5 minute discussion on this matter.

7.2 Play Structure Replacement at Victoria Park - 10 m 22 North Dumfries Karen Winter, Director, Leisure and Community Services will provide a 5 minute presentation on this matter.

7.3 20 Anniversary Update and Feedback 10 m Tamara Cooper, Co-Chair and Amy Ross, Accessibility Advocate will provide an update on this matter.

8. Information Items

8.1 None.

9. Adjournment

Accessible Kitchener Elections

February 27, 2025

Municipal Elections Act Requirements

- **Electors and candidates with disabilities**

- 12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

- **Plan re barriers**

- (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

- **Report**

- (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public

- **Accessibility**

- 45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

Kitchener - Voting Methods for 2026

February 2024 feedback from GRAAC:

- Expressed no support for one method over another
 - Indicated it's the number of methods (hybrid approach) that is the most accessible
 - A hybrid approach presents risks associated with multiple different voting procedures, resourcing implications and training materials
-
- City's Corporate Risk Management Policy
 - Analysis of Voting Methods Undertaken

Kitchener - Voting Methods Investigation

- Corporate Risk Assessment
- Reliability of the optical scan vote tabulators for the past 5 municipal elections
- High satisfaction rate (90%) from the 2022 voter exit survey
- Considering a home vote program for home-bound electors, upon request; and, a drive-through voting experience

Kitchener - Home Vote Program (upon request) (Proposed)

- Implemented in 2022 in Cambridge, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham, Guelph, and for the 2022 and 2018 election by Oakville
- Support eligible voters who are unable to come to an in-person voting location due to illness, injury or disability
- Electors can mark their ballot from their residence, which is brought to them by election officials (registration and appointment is required) and then tabulated through a vote count tabulator

Home Vote Program (upon request) Feedback

- Feedback from GRAAC?
- Advantages?
- Disadvantages?

Kitchener - Drive Thru Voting (Proposed)

- Implemented in 2022 in Cambridge and Windsor
- Eligible voters attend a designated drive thru voting location and remain in vehicles until prompted to drive up to the registration desk (ID verification) then parks at a designated spot and all voters receive a ballot inside a secrecy sleeve and vote within the privacy of the vehicle
- Voters then place their ballot in the ballot box presented to them at their window and then tabulated through a vote count tabulator

Drive Thru Voting Feedback

- Feedback from GRAAC?
- Advantages?
- Disadvantages?

Thank You!

Amanda Fusco
Director of Legislated Services/City Clerk
amanda.fusco@kitchener.ca



Region of Waterloo

Taxi By-Law Review

By: Nora Emtesali and Thomas Hudacin

Background

- The Region of Waterloo's Taxi By-law was last reviewed in 2016.
- Due to many changes in the taxi industry over the last several years, Regional Council directed staff to review and update the By-Law in 2025.
- To ensure accessibility standards are up to date, we want to engage with GRAAC and Cambridge's AAC.

For Review

- As of now, **7%** of the taxi broker's fleet must be accessible.
 - This percentage was determined in 2016 and has not been updated or reviewed.
- Do you have any suggestions that should be included into the Taxi By-Law?

For your information

- A little over **7%** of all taxis in the Region of Waterloo are accessible. Total of **25 accessible taxis** of the 331 active licenses.
- In 2024, the Region implemented a **\$5 incentive** to taxi drivers per accessible ride.
- The Region also provided **\$40,000** for a new accessible vehicle to taxi brokers in 2024.
 - This incentive brought 9 new added vans to our fleet.
 - All except one accessible vehicle was replaced with brand new vehicles.

Your Insight

- We would greatly appreciate any comments or concerns you may have by our current taxi services in the Region of Waterloo.
- Please share your ideas, or considerations that should be considered when updating the Taxi By-Law by March 31.

Contact Information

Nora Emtesali, Policy and Program Advisor

Email: nemtesali@regionofwaterloo.ca



CORPORATE SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

TO: Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee
PREPARED BY: Kaitlin Bos, Manager of Legislative Services / Municipal Clerk
DATE: February 27, 2025
SUBJECT: Township of Wilmot 2024 Status Update

Background:

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.

Summary:

The purpose of this status report is to make the public aware of the Township of Wilmot's progress with regards to our 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan provides a summary of key accomplishments made towards accessibility in 2024 and look ahead to 2025. The Township of Wilmot's 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan can be found on our [website](#).

Report:

Planned Accessibility Action Items as identified in the Township of Wilmot's Multi-year Action Plan 2021-2025 were broken into four categories including:

1. Information and Communications
2. Employment
3. Transportation
4. Built Environment

In 2024 the Township of Wilmot worked on the following planned accessibility action items.

Information and Communications Updates

- Staff continued working towards elimination of PDF fillable forms on Wilmot website, replacing them with online forms via Form Builder
- Legacy PDF documents on the Township's website may not be WCAG 20 Level AA compliant. When possible, these documents were removed, and the information was posted on the website directly or staff provided documents in an alternate format, if requested
- Alternative text has been added or included for photos on digital platforms
- Website transition to GovStack in progress with expected completion in fall 2025

Employment Updates

- Ongoing training of Council and staff for new and updated policies.
- National AccessAbility Week
 - Staff training included creating accessible documents, and providing accessible customer service
 - Staff engagement activities included Red Shirt Day and a Lunch & Learn showing a panel discussion hosted by the Rick Hansen Foundation on the Power of an Inclusive Mindset
- Reviewed policies and procedures related to accessibility and accommodation during the hiring process, new staff orientation, during employment and, when applicable, when returning to work.
- Continued hybrid work model post COVID for staff who wish to continue
- Accommodations offered during application and interview process
- Training for current staff and new-hire staff:
 - AODA Customer Services Standards Training for Employees
 - Understanding Human Rights Training (AODA Edition)
- Updates to the Township's "Jobs and Volunteering" webpage to be AODA compliant

Built Environment Updates

In 2025 Township of Wilmot Council supported the inclusion of \$50,000 in the Capital Budget to complete a Facilities Accessibility Audit. A contract was awarded to Herrington Group, and the project is to be completed in the spring of 2025. Herrington Group will attend all Township facilities and provide recommendations on necessary accessibility updates, and suggestions for improvements. This will help guide our future multi-year accessibility plan, and investments in accessibility projects for built environment.

Wilmot Recreation Complex

- Two physical barriers were removed from washrooms located next to the Active Living Centre (ALC)
- Five Accessible Door Openers were added to all Universal Washrooms and Aquatics Centre / Dryland Training Room
- A total of 21 easy lift/lower blinds were installed in the Wilmot Recreation Complex including the ALC, Program Room, Wayne Roth Room, Community Centre, and the Dryland Training Room

Senior's Woodworking & Craft Shop

- An Accessible Door Opener was added to the entrance door

Castle Kilbride / Administration Complex

- Plumbing insulation added to sinks in four accessible washrooms
- Star decal added to elevator
- Railing decals added to all glass railing panels on the main and upper floor
- Repairs to the ramp at the entrance
- Design of accessible customer service counter and site visit completed
- The following changes, based on feedback received from GRAAC, are in progress:
 - Staff are researching and recording quieter times at the museum in preparation for sensory sensitive times
 - Staff are training to silence the grandfather clock
 - Transition strips between rooms have been deferred to 2025 for budget reasons
- Additional feedback was provided regarding the front entrance (ramp, tactile plates, curb cuts, and front door) which is considered as part of the Space Needs Assessment of the Administration Complex
- Space Needs Assessment
 - Currently in early/investigative stages of space needs at the Administration Complex Key considerations include:
 - Accessible customer service counters
 - Employee growth accommodation i.e. space for current and future employees over the next ten years
 - Redesign of front entrance and ramp based on GRAAC feedback during site visit in April 2023

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.

Township of North Dumfries Victoria Park Play Structure Replacement

PRESENTED TO:

Grand River Accessibility
Advisory Committee



The TOWNSHIP of
NORTH DUMFRIES





Victoria Park– 75 Rose Street, North Dumfries, On



Located in Ayr, On Victoria park is deemed to be a neighbourhood park. The park amenities consist of:

- a heritage pavilion
- two competitive ball diamonds,
- tennis/pickleball courts,
- a batting cage,
- accessible washroom facilities
- A small play structure.

This is one of seven playgrounds in Ayr.



Current Play Structure



The current play structure has a raised wood border around the play area, no accessible ground play structure, a separate 2 bay swing set with 2 belt seating and one accessible swing. The locations also hosts two benches for seating. In 2024 the insurance inspector agreed with staff that the play structure needs replacement due to safety issues and a Spring 2025 timeline was agreed upon.

Concept Design



Burke
PLAY THAT MOVES YOU.
BCIBURKE.COM • 800.266.1250

VICTORIA PARK – CONCEPT 2

PROPOSAL #: 148-191242-



SLIDING

Kids love to slide but it's not just fun! Sliding provides a variety of developmental benefits, including balance, coordination, cooperation and proprioception.



IMAGINATIVE PLAY

Imagination is an important part of child development. Often in play, children learn important life skills that transcend the playground. Skills such as understanding, empathy and working toward a common goal are all practiced in imaginative play.

COLOR KEY	
●	ORANGE
●	OLIVE
●	PURPLE
●	CHARCOAL
●	OLIVE/BLACK



3D Designer: Kaitlyn



COGNITIVE

So many life skills are learned through play! Skills such as cognitive planning, mastering new concepts, problem solving and expression are developed naturally through play events like climbing, sliding and spinning.



CLIMBING

Climbing brings adventure and challenge to the playground while providing necessary developmental benefits such as balance, agility, upper and lower body strength and decision-making skills! When children climb, they develop confidence and take age appropriate risks that help build skills that will help them throughout their lives.



PLAY VARIETY

This design offers the perfect solution for a great playspace and ensures that the necessary and age-appropriate play components are included. With various slides, climbers and spinning events, kids will be able to enhance physical fitness while having fun playing.



OVERHEAD EVENTS

Overhead events build upper body strength and endurance, improve eye-hand coordination and elevate children's self-confidence.



Accessible Features

PLAY STRUCTURE - CONCEPT 1

IMAGINATION

FUN PHONE **Burke**
PLAY THAT MOVES YOU

KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 12

Capacity: 2



Chat with a friend across the playground and improve socialization and communication skills with the Burke Fun Phone!

- Designed for ages 5 – 12 yrs
- Unobstructed routes
- Different levels of play
- Low Ground Features
- Transfer stations

CLIMBING

TRANSFER STATION **Burke**
PLAY THAT MOVES YOU

KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 12

Capacity: 1



Help all children get into the heart of the play with this transfer station. At Burke, we take play for all seriously and want children of all abilities to enjoy the benefits of playing together. The Transfer Station is a pivotal component in playground design, offering a safe and accessible space for children to transition between play structures.



Accessible Features

SLIDING

ROCK N ROLL SLIDE



KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 12

Capacity: 2



This exclusive slide adds excitement to your playgrounds. It features 'Burke Built™' quality, and the double-wall compounded plastic construction means it is stronger and will last longer. This innovative slide offers an exciting twist to the traditional sliding experience. With its dynamic design, the Rock N Roll Slide captivates children's imagination and provides a secure and exhilarating ride.

OVERHEAD

CRUNCH BAR



KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 1

Capacity: 1



This accessible piece of equipment is placed ground level, and intention is to create equitable play opportunities for all ages and abilities to gain upper body strength.

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BALANCING

TRANSITION STAIR



KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 12

Capacity: 1



Get to the height of fun with the stairway to the heart of the play structure! Burke's Transition Stairs are a versatile and essential component of playground design, seamlessly connecting various play structures and providing safe passage for children.



Accessible Features

SLIDING

MONACO SLIDE



KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 12

Capacity: 2



Fast, curvy and exciting like its namesake race course, the Monaco™ Slide is a must for children everywhere! Slides keep kids moving and having fun while developing core strength and balance! With its contemporary aesthetic and smooth curves, the Monaco Slide not only adds a touch of sophistication to the playground but also provides an exciting and secure sliding experience.

PASSIVE

CLUBHOUSE ROOF



KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2-12

Capacity: 6



The ClubHouse design offers kids and families the opportunity to reconnect and rediscover the wonders of nature within a safe and durable environment. A full collection of ClubHouse components, including climbers, panels, enclosures and roofs, cultivate imaginations and nurture the need for play.

IMAGINATION

STEERING WHEEL



KEY FEATURES

Ages: 2 - 12

Capacity: 2



Drive a race car, a semi truck or limousine and let imaginations run wild while developing social and cognitive skills and having fun!

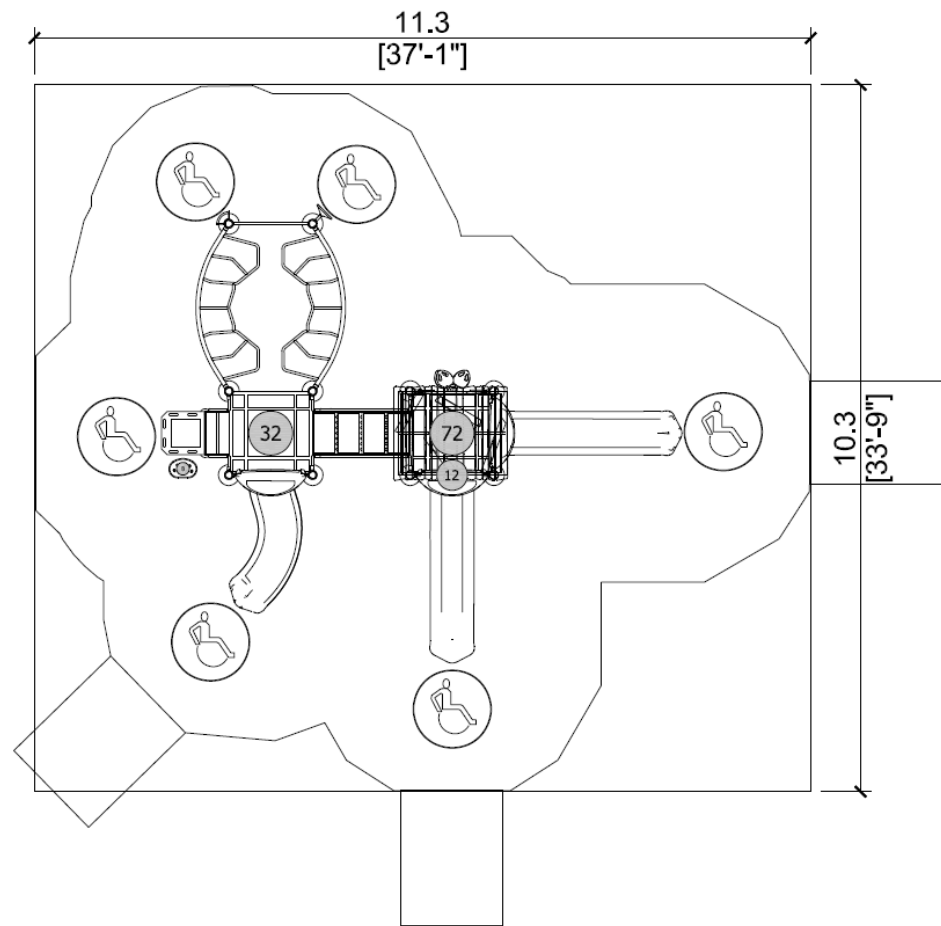
- Wood Barrier around play structured removed
- Ground Covering with Engineered Wood Fibre Safety Surfacing.



Blue Print Design

SITE AREA:
116.4 SQ. M. (1255 SQ. FT.)

NOTE: ALTHOUGH ALL ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO PROVIDE AN ACCURATE SITE IT MAY NOT TRULY REPRESENT THE AREA WHERE THIS STRUCTURE IS TO BE PLACED.



THIS DESIGN MEETS ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY AODA AND CAN/CSA-Z614 ANNEX H

5-12 AGE GROUP		
EVENT	REQUIRED	PROVIDED
ELEVATED	X	5
TRANSFER ACCESSIBLE	5	5
GROUND LEVEL	2	3
GROUND LEVEL TYPES	2	3

Features:

- Accessible ground area
- Additional features lower to ground
- Inclusive swing set – separate from the play area will remain.
- addresses levels of ability to create play experiences that meet a variety of needs and interests.



Questions?

Karen Winter - Director of Leisure and Community Services

kwinter@northdumfries.ca