



GRAAC

GRAND RIVER
ACCESSIBILITY
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

**Grand River Accessibility Advisory
Committee New Member Orientation
January 23rd 2025**

Territorial Acknowledgment

As we are gathered virtually, please take a moment to recognize the land that we are joining from together today. Territorial and Land Acknowledgements are part of Truth and Reconciliation and part of our own learning and our unlearning of the history and culture of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people. Acknowledging and understanding the Truth and then committing to personal and collaborative action can be one way of ensuring meaning and commitment to Territorial and Land Acknowledgements.

GRAAC – monthly meetings

Welcome and Introductions

LoriAnn Palubeski, City of Kitchener

Advisory Committee of Council

- 7 municipalities
- Legislated requirement under the AODA
- Advise 7 municipalities on municipal work (builds, services, plans)
- Advisory Committee NOT Advocacy Committee
- Designated Council reps attend monthly meetings

GRAAC meetings

- Monthly for 10 months (no meetings in July & August)
- Meet the 4th Thursday of the month from 1:30-4pm (except for December)
- Zoom but piloting Hybrid
- Janis is the GRAAC Admin support (email GRAAC package 1 week prior to meeting which includes the meeting link)
- Meetings run by GRAAC Co-chairs (elections in Feb 2025)
- The chair will manage the order of speaking

GRAAC Staff Reps

- Each municipality has a Staff Rep = Kit – Lolita/Lori, Wat – Amy R, North Dumfries – Ashley, Wellesley – Amy H, Wilmot – Kaitlin, Woolwich – Alex, Region of Waterloo, Emily
- The municipality you live in is your GRAAC Staff Rep (i.e., City of Kitchener = Lolita, City of Waterloo = Amy Ross, Woolwich = Alex)
- GRAAC Staff Reps attend monthly meetings (answer questions)
- Meeting accommodations

Term of Reference

Amy Ross, City of Waterloo

GRAAC Terms of Reference

- Mission: assist the participating municipalities in fulfilling the purpose of the AODA Legislation by providing vision and advice for the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers.
- GRAAC is an advisory committee that follows the procedures set out in the terms of reference.

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 2)

- Duties and Functions:
 - Advise Councils about:
 - the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the accessibility plans of the 7 municipalities.
 - the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises, or part of a building, structure or premise, that the municipalities lease, purchase, construct or significantly renovate.
 - accessibility of site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act, having regard to the approved barrier-free best practices of the 7 municipalities.

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 3)

- Review and respond about municipal matters with advice as appropriate.
- Consult with persons with disabilities, community groups and organizations representing persons with disabilities to capture and communicate emerging issues.
- Refer issues, make recommendations or suggestions for action to appropriate groups, agencies, committees and organizations in the community to address barriers that affect persons with disabilities.
- Advice to address issues of inclusion from services provided by the 7 municipalities.
- Advice about government directives and regulations relating to the status of persons with disabilities including regulations for the Legislation.
- Advice on existing and proposed procurement processes for the purchase of goods or services with regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Liaise with other accessibility advisory committees such as Cambridge and Guelph.
- Provide feedback for these terms of reference and advise on changes if required.

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 4)

- Committee Size and Composition
 - 11-15 voting members, appointed by the councils of 7 municipalities for maximum 8 year terms
 - a majority of members include persons with disabilities representing reflect the cross-disability nature of the definition of “disability”
 - Remainder of the committee include parents/caregivers of a person with a disability, who may also be persons with a disability; people interested in disability issues, who may also be persons with a disability; staff representatives from agencies related to disability issues.
 - Representation from all 7 municipalities
 - Non-voting
 - Council Liaisons
 - Staff Advisors

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 5)

- Role of Staff
 - serve in an advisory/support capacity
 - advise on meeting procedural matters and Roberts Rules of Order
 - assist to identify issues that need review by the committee
 - provide resources
 - convey feedback to their respective municipality
 - agenda and minutes coordination

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 6)

- Selection and Qualifications of Members
 - Annual recruitment and selection is a shared responsibility of the 7 councils.
 - Staff Advisor Group carry out a bias-free recruitment and selection process, recommended for appointments to their respective councils for approval.
 - Committee members are chosen for life experience with a disability and their knowledge of such and/or expertise in barrier-free initiatives or disability issues.
 - Agencies are accepted based on the agency's merit to represent persons with disabilities.
 - To avoid potential conflict of interest, employees of participating municipalities are not eligible to be voting members of the Committee

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 7)

- Co-Chairs

- elected from among the committee members annually at the first meeting of the new Committee
- preside over meetings and committee business
- Co-Chairs may not chair sub-committees
- work in consultation with Staff Advisors to set agenda for each meeting

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 8)

- Sub-Committees
 - Established as needed
 - The Committee will approve terms of reference for each sub-committee created
 - Draw upon members from the committee and may also include individuals who are not members such as individuals or organizations with a particular area of expertise
 - Staff Advisors and Council Liaisons are non-voting members of sub-committees

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 9)

- Meetings
 - Monthly schedule – 4th Thursday afternoon
 - No less than four (4) times each year
 - Meetings will be open to the public
- Quorum
 - majority of the Voting Members
 - If no quorum, the meeting may continue but no decisions may be made and no resolutions may be passed.
 - Any items on the Agenda requiring a decision or resolution of the Committee will be deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 10)

- Voting

- consensus model for decision making; if not possible a simple majority vote will be held
- In the instance of a tie, the Co-chair chairing the meeting will break the tie
- The Co-chair may vote on any motion

- Delegations

- welcome to attend meetings for issues within the terms of reference.
- may address the Committee for five minutes, Committee may grant additional five minutes.
- Delegations will be approved by the Co-Chairs

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 11)

- Reporting and Communication
 - Advice and feedback provided through the GRAAC Staff Advisor Group
 - The Co-Chairs or designate will be the official spokesperson to the media and the public
- Conflict of Interest
 - Subject to the Conflict of Interest Policy attached as Schedule “A” to these terms of reference.
 - All Voting Members, Staff Advisors and Council Liaisons shall abide by the policy.
- Absences
 - absent for three consecutive meetings without notice or justifiable reason, membership will be reviewed by the GRAAC Staff Advisor Group.

GRAAC Terms of Reference (continued 12)

- Remuneration
 - currently no remuneration
 - accommodation expenses covered by the Staff Group
- Dissolution of the Committee
 - Triggered by any of:
 - Expiration of term
 - Completion of task or mandate
 - Resolution of issues
 - Legislative requirement no longer exists
 - Merger with another committee
 - Following the annual review process
 - Recommendation by the Committee, staff, or Council of the municipalities.

Regional Government

Regional and municipal responsibilities

Emily Moore, Region of Waterloo

Local Government

- Waterloo Region is a two-tiered municipality and consists of three cities and four townships
- Municipal governments
 - Cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge
 - Townships of Wellesley, Wilmot, Woolwich and North Dumfries
- Region of Waterloo
 - Regional government
 - Services that are region-wide and for all residents

Examples of Services

Region of Waterloo

- Curbside garbage collection
- Grand River Transit (bus, ION, MobilityPlus)
- Community Services (Ontario Works, licensed childcare, community housing)
- Regional licensing and enforcement (e.g. taxis, lawn watering)
- Township libraries
- Major arterial roads and signals
- Paramedic Services (ambulance)
- Public Health, service and business inspections
- Region of Waterloo International Airport
- Water treatment

Municipalities

- Parks, recreation and leisure
- Neighbourhoods, community centres, local roads
- Local licensing and by-law enforcement (e.g. noise)
- City libraries
- Fire departments
- Cemeteries
- Building inspections and permits
- Tax collection
- Vital statistics (e.g. births, marriage licenses, deaths)
- Water distribution

Reference

- Please visit the Region's website for more details on the types of services offered by the Region of Waterloo and the local municipalities

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/regional-responsibilities---who-does-what-in-government.aspx>

Municipal Government

Township responsibilities

Ashley Good, Township of North Dumfries

Amy Harron, Township of Wellesley

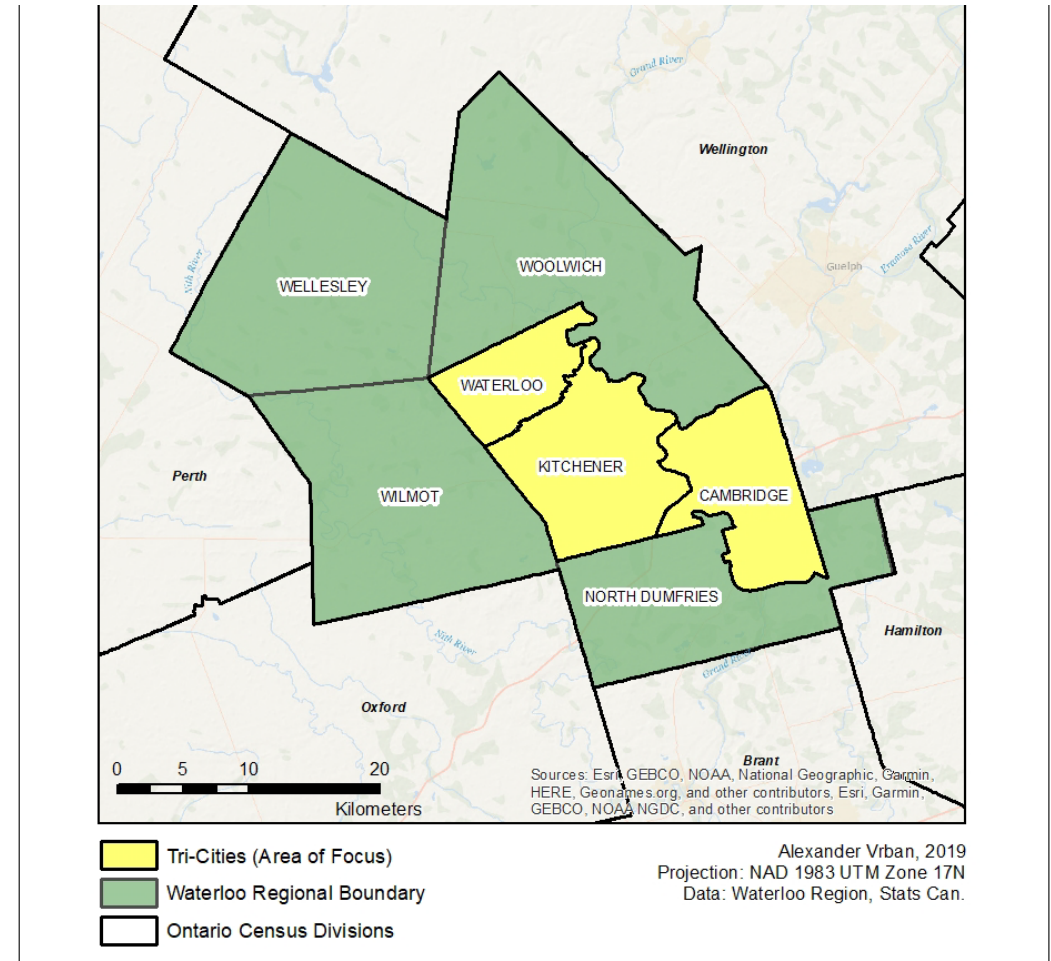
Kaitlin Bos, Township of Wilmot

Alex Smyth, Township of Woolwich

Townships in the Region of Waterloo

There are four Townships within the Region of Waterloo highlighted green or darker in the image to the right.

- Township of North Dumfries in the Southeast
- Township of Wellesley in the Northwest
- Township of Wilmot in the West
- Township of Woolwich in the North



Examples of Township Services

- Municipal roads
 - Asphalt paving
 - Dust control
 - Grading
 - Potholes
 - Sidewalks
 - Snow removal
 - Tree trimming
 - Traffic signs
- Permits
 - Building permit
 - Open fire burn permit
 - Entrance permit on municipal road
 - Road work permit
- Planning applications
 - Minor variance
 - Consent applications
 - Site plan control
- Emergency response
 - Fire department
- Licensing and registration
 - Dog licensing
 - Food trucks
 - Lottery
 - Vital statistics
- Enforcement
 - Property standards
 - Parking
 - Noise
- Community services
 - Parks
 - Arenas
 - Community centres
 - Trails

GRAAC Election

Positions to be elected at the February 23rd committee meeting

- Chair
- Co-chair

AODA Legislation

Amy Ross, City of Waterloo

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

- Became law in 2005 replacing the ODA
- Goal is for Ontario to be accessible and inclusive by 2025
 - first Canadian province and one of the first jurisdictions in the world to enact specific legislation establishing a goal and time-frame for accessibility.
 - first jurisdiction to legislate accessibility reporting and to establish standards in areas like employment, transportation and the design of public spaces.
- **Accessibility standards**
 - laws that government, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations must follow to become more accessible
 - help organizations identify and remove barriers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in 5 areas of daily life.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) continued 2

- Customer service standard

- helps remove barriers for people with disabilities so they can access goods, services or facilities.

- Integrated accessibility standards regulation guidelines

- Combination of Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces standards
- Will be **undergoing a review**. The existing accessibility standards and reporting deadlines will still apply during the review.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) continued 3

- **Information and communications standard**
 - helps organizations make their information accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Transportation standard**
 - makes it easier for everyone to travel in the province.
- **Employment standard**
 - helps make hiring and employee support practices more accessible.
- **Design of public spaces standard**
 - Helps organizations make new and redeveloped outdoor public areas accessible such as as trails, beach access routes and exterior paths of travel.
 - Requirements do not include areas covered by the [Ontario Building Code](#) (OBC).

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) continued 4

- proposing new accessibility standards through the work of three [Standards Development Committees](#) in:
 - [health care](#)
 - [education for kindergarten to Grade 12](#)
 - [postsecondary education](#)
- compliance reporting
 - schedule by organization type
- [AODA reviews](#)
 - conducted every 4 years
 - [4th review currently underway](#)

Built Environment Sub-Committee

Lori Palubeski, City of Kitchener

GRAAC Built Environment Sub-Committee

- Run by the Chair (elections)
- Municipal builds go through the Chair first (Staff Rep contacts Chair)
- Chair has a standing agenda item (monthly meetings)
- Interior follow current OBC (barrier free), exterior AODA (DOPS)
- Follow the DOPS within the IASR within the AODA
- In-between GRAAC meetings Chair may invite members to site visits
- Chair is part of any new comment sheets or position papers related to Built Environment
- Also includes best practices, above and beyond legislation

GRAAC Feedback and Position Papers

- Installation of Sidewalks (June 2014), Guide to intersections (1 page)
- Accessible parking (June 2015)
- Washroom Accessibility Comments for New Construction/Renovation
- Sidewalk Snow Removal position paper (Jan 2017)
- Rest Areas Accessibility Comments (Oct 2017)
- Outdoor Play Spaces/Playgrounds Accessibility Comments (Oct 2017)
- Recreational Trails Accessibility Comments (Oct 2017)
- Painted Crosswalks Accessibility Comments (Feb 2019)

GRAAC Comment Sheets & Position papers continued...

- GRAAC position paper with Regards to Signage (Oct 2021)
- GRAAC position paper: In-Boulevard Shared Use Facilities (Sept 2021)

Questions for staff