

POLICY		CAT-SUB-####	
[Policy Title]		Category Choose an item.	Sub-category Choose an item.
Approval Type COUNCIL	Department/Division Community Services Department	Author and Position LoriAnn Palubeski, Manager, Program and Resource Services	
Date Approved Click here to enter a date.	Last Reviewed/Amended Click here to enter a date.	Next Review Date Click here to enter a date.	

Related Policies or Procedures

- [Title with embedded link]
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Policy Purpose

The Committee will be known as the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee or “GRAAC”.

These terms of reference were developed under the guidance of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 as outlined in section 29 of the Act.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is in place to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities by including lived experience and knowledge of disability experience in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation locally.

Definitions

“**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**” is legislation that sets out a process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards.

“**ad hoc**” means something that is formed or used for a special or immediate purpose.

“**Advisory Committee**” is a board or committee appointed by Council (s) to act in an advisory capacity to Council (s) on operational and strategic issues.

“**Agency**” is a business or community organization with a focus is to serve and/or support people with disabilities that are located in The Region of Waterloo.

"Barrier" is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society, such a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a systemic barrier, a policy or practice.

"Co-Chair" means the presiding officer for the meetings, they provide leadership to move forward business outlined on the meeting agenda, ensures decorum is maintained at meetings, and the rules of procedure and conduct are observed.

"Committee Administrator" is a staff member from the Coordinating Municipality who provides administrative support to the Committee to complete tasks including but not limited to the agenda and minutes.

"Coordinating Municipality" is the participating municipality that is identified by the staff coordination group as the lead in the coordination of the committee.

"Councils" are the elected councils of the participating municipalities/townships.

"Disability" is defined in legislation as set out in section 10 of the Human Rights Code, R.S.O 1990 c. H.19., more broadly that means and/or reflects any degree of physical, sensory, emotional, cognitive, intellectual or mental condition. It can include illnesses and/or injuries. Disability can occur at any point in a person's life (some people are born with a disability, while others develop a disability later in life), and it can be permanent, temporary, or episodic.

"Diversity" is the presence of different and multiple characteristics that make up individual and collective identities, including race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, language, and physical ability.

"Equity" is creating an approach that would provide fair and equal access and opportunity for everyone, by addressing discrimination, exclusion and barriers experienced by distinct groups. Equity is not the same as equality, nor is it the same as inequality.

"Ex-officio" means that by virtue of holding office (Regional Chair or Mayor) may step in as the representative on behalf of their municipality in the absence of their appointed member.

"Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)" is Provincial Legislation that provides set of standards established under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in Ontario, Canada, which outlines requirements for organizations to make their services, facilities, and communication accessible to people with disabilities across various areas like customer service, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces; aiming to create an accessible Ontario by 2025.

"Inclusion" is an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources.

“Intersectionality” means the interactions and cumulative effects of multiple forms of discrimination affecting the daily lives of individuals, the term also refers more broadly to understanding how various aspects of individual identity—including race, gender, social, class, and sexuality - interact to create unique experiences of privilege or oppression.

"Legislation" means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as amended, or it's associated Regulations, as applicable.

“Municipal Staff Representatives/Liaisons” means a staff member from a participating municipality who attends meetings to provide advice and assist the Committee in reaching decisions. Each of the participating municipalities, where possible, will have a staff person in attendance at each Committee meeting and at coordination meetings.

“Ontario Building Code” is Provincial Legislation that detailed technical and administrative requirements and minimum standards for building construction.

"Participating Municipalities" is one of the municipalities listed in Schedule 'A' of the document.

“Pecuniary interest” means that an individual has a reasonable likelihood or expectation financial loss or gain related to a matter that is before the Committee for consideration.

“Quorum” is the minimum number of members in attendance at a meeting to advance the business of the Committee.

“Staff Coordination Group” is the group of staff that is consulted to support the overall coordination of the committee.

“Sub-Committee” is a smaller appointed committee, composed of some members of the larger committee, that is assigned to focus on a particular task within the committee's jurisdiction, and have a responsibility of reporting to the larger committee.

“Waterloo Region” is the geographic area which encompasses all of the participating municipalities as outlined in Schedule 'A' of the Terms of Reference.

Policy Scope

This policy shall apply to the advisory committee members who are appointed to the Committee. Any member of the Committee who does not comply with the policy may be removed by the Council who approved the appointment of the member, from the Committee.

Application

- Employees** *(Indicate below which categories apply: All employees, Permanent full-time, Temporary full-time, Continuous part-time, Casual, Probationary, Student, Management, Non-union)*
- Unions** *(Indicate below which categories apply: All Unions, CUPE 68 Civic, CUPE 68 Mechanics, CUPE 791, IATSE, IBEW, KPFFA)*
- Council (s)**
- Specified Positions:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☒ Other: Local Boards and Advisory Committees

Policy Content

4.1 Purpose of the Committee

GRAAC will provide advice to Council and staff for all of the participating municipalities on accessibility matters pursuant to Section 29 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

4.2 Governance

GRAAC is governed by procedures detailed in the Municipal Act, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, the coordinating municipality's Code of Conduct, and any other applicable legislation.

The Committee will rely on the Procedural By-law of the Coordinating municipality as the default for procedural guidance.

4.3 Mission

GRAAC assists the participating municipalities in fulfilling the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) by providing advice in regard to the identification, prevention and removal of barriers.

4.4 Mandate

GRAAC will provide advice and recommendations to Council and staff from the participating municipalities about facilities, public spaces and other infrastructure, programs, services, activities and policies to improve inclusiveness and accessibility for individuals with disabilities as per the regulations and standards outlined in the AODA.

4.5 Legislated Responsibilities

- a. Advise Council and staff of the participating municipalities regarding the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of municipal accessibility plans.
- b. Advise Council and staff of the participating municipalities on the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises that the municipality maintain, lease, purchase, construct or significantly renovate.
- c. Review and advise on the accessibility of site plans and drawings as described in Section 41 of the Planning Act, as selected and discussed at GRAAC meetings or sub-committee meetings, including all municipal projects for the participating municipalities.
- d. Perform all other functions that are specified in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (O. Reg. 191/11).

4.6 Other Duties / Responsibilities

- a. Consult with persons with disabilities, community groups and organizations representing persons with disabilities in order to capture and communicate emerging issues to participating municipalities.
- b. Provide advice to staff and Council of the participating municipalities on ways to address issues for the inclusion of persons with disabilities relating to the provision of the services provided by the municipalities.
- c. Participate in consultation opportunities as they relate to the review of relevant legislation, regulations, and standards (such as AODA, Ontario Building Code, IASR).
- d. Advise on existing and proposed procurement processes as requested by staff of the of the participating municipalities, with respect to the purchase of good or services with regard to accessibility where deemed appropriate.

Suggest relevant agenda items to be added to a future agenda. In between Committee meetings, members can request additional agenda items by notifying the coordinating municipality, Co-Chair or participating municipality staff liaison. Agenda item requests are not guaranteed to be added to a future agenda but will be considered by the Staff Coordination Group on a case-by-case basis.

4.7 Committee Composition

Voting Members

GRAAC shall have a minimum of 14 members and a maximum of 16 members appointed to be on the committee, with full voting privileges, the majority whom shall be persons with disabilities, as per Section 29 (3) of the AODA. Membership may be comprised of a combination of the following:

- Up to 4 representatives who reside within the townships, identified as a participating municipality as outlined in Schedule 'A', with an overall goal of appointing a representative from each of the townships;
- Up to 8 representatives who reside within the participating municipalities; and,
- Up to 4 representatives from agencies/organizations with mandates to serve and/or support people with disabilities and who serve Region of Waterloo residents;

Committee Members shall have experience and knowledge in the field of disability, have a lived disability experiences or are agencies serving persons with disabilities.

Of the membership listed above where a committee member is being recommended for appointment to represent one of the participating municipalities, the Nominating Committee recommendation will be forwarded to the respective Municipal Clerk to be brought forward to their Council for appointment.

A full list of appointed members will be shared with the Regional Clerk for the Region of Waterloo, who may then share that information with Regional Council, through correspondence or an information report.

Non-Voting Members

Each of the participating municipalities may also appoint a member of Council as a representative on the committee, they may attend all meetings and may liaise on issues relating to their municipalities and communicate their municipalities perspective, but will serve as non-voting members. The Mayor of the participating municipalities and the Regional Chair will serve as non-voting ex-officio members of the committee.

4.8 Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Voting Members appointed to the Committee. Quorum shall be reduced when a member has formally resigned from the Committee or when fewer than maximum number of members have been appointed to the Committee. If quorum is not achieved at a meeting, 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 referred to the next scheduled meeting. For any member participating virtually, where possible cameras are encouraged to be on, to ensure quorum is maintained.

4.9 Voting

Every member of the committee is required to vote, including the Co-chairs. Those members who are present at a Committee meeting when a decision is rendered shall vote, except if they are disqualified from voting because of a pecuniary interest or is absent from the meeting during the vote. Any member who refuses to vote will be recorded as voting in the negative (opposed). In the event of a tied vote, the motion being voted on is deemed to be lost.

4.10 Committee Member Attendance and Expectations

Any member of the Committee who fails to attend three successive regular meetings, without communicating with the coordinating municipality, or designate, may be removed from the Committee. Committee member attendance may be taken into consideration when considering members for reappointment.

4.11 Committee Term

The Committee shall serve for a two-year term and, representatives will remain members of the Committee until new members (successors) are appointed. The term of the Committee will align with the term of Council. If a member is no longer able to volunteer on the Committee and must resign before the expiration of their term, the coordinating municipality may proceed with the recruitment process, if required, with the use of the Nominating Committee to appoint a new person or agency to complete the remaining balance of the unexpired term. Members would have no limit to the number of consecutive terms they would be eligible for reappointment; where a member has been appointed for 8 consecutive years, the length in which a member has been on the Committee may be taken into consideration in the reappointment process.

4.12 Committee Appointment Process

Applications for the Committee will be received by the coordinating municipality. All participating municipalities are encouraged to advertise the recruitment process through their preferred communication methods. Once the recruitment process has closed, the applications will be vetted through the City of Kitchener Nominating Committee as outlined in Policy GOV-BOA-010 - Nominating Committee, along with the support of the Municipal Clerk or designate, in consultation with an accessibility professional identified by the City Municipal Clerk.

Once the Nominating Committee completes their review based on a number of factors, including but not limited to: qualification; committee-specific qualification; lived experience; residing within the Region of Waterloo; diversity; and, demographic/spectrum data, to make a recommendation for the slate of members to be appointed to the Committee. For the list of members that are recommended for appointment, the proposed members applications and unselected applicants will be forwarded to the Municipal Clerks office for the participating municipalities in which they reside, and the Council's for the participating municipalities will then consider the Nominating Committee recommendation and confirm the member appointments for their municipality. It would be the final decision of the respective municipality to confirm their representative.

If an agency is recommended for appointment, they would be referred to the Council of the coordinating municipality to consider and approve their appointment.

Once all the participating municipalities finalize their appointments, the Regional Clerk for the Region of Waterloo will be provided with the full list of approved membership, that can then be forwarded on to Regional Council through correspondence or an information report.

4.13 Meeting Schedule and Location

GRAAC will generally meet on a monthly basis ten (10) times per year, on the fourth Thursday of the month. There are no meetings in July and/or August. The Coordinating Municipality will prepare an annual schedule that will be added to all participating municipality's websites. The date and location of the meeting can be modified at the discretion of the Coordinating Municipality in consultation with the Staff Coordination group. Notice of any modified meeting dates will be updated on all participating municipalities websites. Staff will aim for all meetings to be in a hybrid meeting format, with an in-person and virtual option. When hybrid is not possible the default will be virtual. Notice of the meeting format will be shared on the meeting agenda.

4.14 Open Meetings

All meetings are open to the public save and except for reasons outlined under the Section 239 of the Municipal Act, as amended. No person will be excluded from meetings except for improper conduct, as defined by the Coordinating Municipality's Procedural By-law. When a matter is considered in a closed meeting, members shall maintain confidential of the subject matter.

4.15 Coordinating Municipality

The Coordinating Municipality will be the lead in administering and coordinating the committee. The Coordinating Municipality will be responsible for matters including but not limited to: preparing the annual committee calendar; preparing the agenda and any necessary agenda setting meetings; minutes; attendance management; coordinating recruitment; coordinating committee training, and coordinating the committee budget and payment of committee meeting expenses/reimbursements.

4.16 Staff Coordination Group

All participating municipalities will have a staff liaison assigned as a primary representative and/or designate, identified to support the coordination of the committee. The staff liaisons will be part of a staff coordination group that will support the committee's operation. The staff coordination group will be consulted on process and procedures related to committee operations, including committee orientation. The Staff Coordinators will be the primary contact for the Coordinating municipality for matters related to the respective participating municipality.

4.17 Staff Liaison - Roles and Responsibilities

Each of the participating municipalities should prioritize having a staff liaison in attendance at meetings to receive committee advice and assist the Committee in reaching decisions. The staff liaison can be a member of the staff coordination group or a designate.

Staff liaisons will also work with the coordinating municipality to bring forward matters to the agenda from their respective municipalities for the Committees consideration, and will report back to their Councils on any matters that may require ratification.

Staff liaisons will take a collaborative approach where there may be a matter that has implications across municipal boundaries, to confirm any necessary approval processes for the affected municipality, prior to scheduling the matter on a Committee agenda.

4.18 Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs will be appointed annually by the Committee at the first meeting of the new year. The Co-Chairs will lead meetings and act as a liaison between the Committee and staff where members may wish to bring forward items for consideration on a future agenda. The Co-Chairs will notify the staff coordination group of any agenda items requested by the members in between Committee meetings.

Members who are appointed as a Co-Chair would not be permitted to also chair a sub-committee.

4.19 Built Environment - Advisory Work

The Committee is required by legislation to review and advise on the accessibility of site plans and drawings as described in Section 41 of the Planning Act, as selected and discussed at GRAAC meetings or sub-committee meetings, including all municipal projects for the participating municipalities. Where possible the Committee will try to appoint a member to help lead and organize the advisory work related to the built environment, the appointed member if not available can appoint a designate. If

the Committee for whatever reason is not able to appoint a lead, the participating municipalities may request assistance from the entire committee to support the built environment advisory work. A routine item will be included on the monthly agenda to ensure any built environment work completed throughout the month is reported back to the committee and a tracking sheet summarizing the work completed will be included in the agenda for reference.

Built Environment - Advisory work will be eligible for a daily honourarium allocation and mileage expenses as outlined in the Committee Honourarium and Reimbursement section of this policy.

4.20 Sub-Committees

Where the Staff Coordination Committee, in consultation with GRAAC feels a sub-committee is required, they may be created. All such committees will be ad hoc in nature and should have a specific, clearly articulated mandate. All sub-committees will report on their work to the larger committee and any direction required, shall be considered by the Committee as a whole. All sub-committees shall be reviewed annually by the Staff Coordination Group in consultation with the Committee to determine if the mandate is still accurate and whether the sub-committee is still required.

Where the Staff Coordination Group in consultation with the Committee determines additional expertise may be required on a sub-committee to complete the mandate of their work, membership on a sub-committees may be expanded, if required, to include individual or organizations with a particular area of expertise who are not Committee members.

Where a sub-committee is deemed required, membership on the sub-committee will be one less than the overall committee's quorum.

Staff Representatives and Council Liaisons shall not be voting members of sub-committees, their role is to serve in a resource capacity and to provide input on matters related to their respective municipalities.

4.21 Committee Honourarium and Reimbursement

All participating municipalities are committed to removing any barriers that would prohibit an individual's interest in participating in the Committee, that may include support through technology, transportation and childcare. The goal is to continue developing and fostering a community where equity, inclusion, and anti-racism are core principals of policies programs and procedures.

Members can reach out to the coordinating municipality to seek reimbursement (payment and/or in-kind services) to cover the following:

1. Honourarium Committee meeting:

Membership is voluntary and a public service; however, members will receive an honorarium for regular monthly meetings. Agency representatives, where it is the agency that is appointed as a member to the committee, will not be eligible for an honourarium.

Members will be provided \$150. honourarium per committee meeting attended, by cheque or electronic fund transfer/monthly.

2. Honourarium Built Environment - Advisory Work:

Members will be provided \$50. daily rate/honourarium for sub-committee work related to the built environment, in addition to travel costs outlined below.

3. Travel Costs:

- **Public transit pass:**

Committee members will be eligible to have their bus or LRT expenses covered for travel to and from the Committee meeting, on the date of the meeting, through the form of complimentary passes provided by the coordinating municipality.

- **Parking:**

Committee members will be eligible to park at the Municipal facility where the Committee meeting is held, on the day and time of the meeting, at no cost through the form of complimentary parking passes. Committee members requiring a parking pass will be required to advise the Committee Administrator of this need and will be provided with the parking pass at the meeting.

- **Alternative Transportation Arrangements**

Committee members who require an alternative form of transportation to the Committee meeting, can reach out to the Committee Administrator who can assist to support transit needs to attend a committee meeting(s).

- **Mileage**

Committee members will be eligible for mileage for all sub-committee related work to the built environment advisory work, at the mileage rate determined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) effective January 1st of each year. Mileage will be reimbursed from the site of departure direct to the arrival site, including the direct return trip.

4. Childcare

The costs of childcare that committee members incur, to participate in monthly committee meetings, will be reimbursed on an as-needed basis. The maximum payable amount and additional information are provided in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and will be communicated to Committee members.

5. Technology

The Committee Administrator will support reasonable technology requests made by Committee members to assist in removing barriers for participation (such as loan of laptop)

The participating municipalities are committed to accommodating the needs of committee members under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

All reimbursement requests should be arranged directly with the coordinating municipality.

4.22 Conflict of Interest

The Municipal Conflict of Interest Act outlines a primary set of ethical rules for Council, Committee and local board members. These rules apply if members have a pecuniary (financial) interest in a matter that is before them at a meeting. The legislation requires a member with a pecuniary interest to:

- disclose the interest and its general nature before the matter is considered at the meeting;
- complete any required form(s) that are necessary by the municipal conflict of interest act;
- not take part in the discussion or voting on any question in respect of the matter;
- not attempt to influence the voting, during or after the meeting; and
- immediately leave the meeting if the meeting is closed to the public.

4.23 Code of Conduct

Members are expected to follow the Code of Conduct for the Coordinating Municipality. Persons in violation of the Code of Conduct may be referred to their appointing municipality and participating municipality staff liaison to consider whether the member will be permitted to maintain their appointment.

Each member will receive a copy of the Coordinating Municipalities Code of Conduct as part of their Committee Orientation at the start of each term.

4.24 Dissolution of the Committee

Dissolution of the Committee requires a resolution from each Council. Dissolution of the committee may be triggered by one of the following:

- Expiration of term
- Completion of task or mandate
- Resolution of issues
- Legislative requirement no longer exists
- Merger with another committee
- Recommendation by the GRAAC, staff or Council
- Direction from the Province of Ontario

4.25 Participating Municipalities

1. Region of Waterloo
2. City of Waterloo
3. City of Kitchener

4. Township of Wellesley
5. Township of Wilmot
6. Township of Woolwich
7. Township of North Dumfries

5. HISTORY OF POLICY CHANGES

The Terms of Reference was previously approved in 2016. An extensive review of the Terms of Reference was completed in Q3/Q4 2024 & Q1 2025.

The participating municipalities shall endeavour to review the Terms of Reference every second term.

The Council of the Participating Municipalities approved the Terms of Reference on the dates as outlined below:

- Region of Waterloo
- City of Waterloo
- City of Kitchener
- Township of Wellesley
- Township of Wilmot
- Township of Woolwich
- Township of North Dumfries

Results of Review

- No Edits Required
- Housekeeping Edits
- Substantial Edits
- Repeal/Replace

Policy History

Administrative and Housekeeping Changes

Date	Nature of Change
yyyy-mm-dd	Departmental re-organization/Titling changes/ restructuring. Standing Committee

Substantial Changes

Date	Council/CLT Directive
yyyy-mm-dd	As Per Council/CLT Directive - Report #