



CORPORATE SERVICES

Staff Report

REPORT NO:	COR-2025-11
TO:	Council
SUBMITTED BY:	Greg Clark, Director of Corporate Services / CFO
PREPARED BY:	Kaitlin Bos, Manager of Legislative Services / Municipal Clerk
REVIEWED BY:	Greg Clark, Acting CAO
DATE:	April 7, 2025
SUBJECT:	2024 Annual Status Update – Multi-year Accessibility Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report COR-2025-11 - 2024 Annual Status Update – Multi-year Accessibility Plan be received for information.

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](#).

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.

A yearly report is to be presented to municipal council detailing the progress made by the organization in implementing accessibility initiatives as mandated by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), outlining the steps taken to remove barriers and improve accessibility for people with disabilities within the council's jurisdiction.

Municipal Clerk, Kaitlin Bos, presented the 2024 Annual Status Update – Multi-year Accessibility Plan to GRAAC on February 27, 2025 and received supportive comments on the work being completed by the Township of Wilmot in efforts to improve accessibility.

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 2024 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 main 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

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.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Healthy Community

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

None at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.