



The Township of North Dundas Multi-Year Accessibility Plan For 2022 – 2027

Township of North Dundas
636 St. Lawrence Street
Winchester, Ontario K0C 2K0

Prepared December 2023

If this information is required in an alternate format, please contact Nancy Johnston,
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk, at 613-774-2105 Ext. 226 or
njohnston@northdundas.com

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN UPDATE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|--|-------|----|
| A Message from the Mayor | | 2 |
| Commitment to Accessibility Planning | | 3 |
| Definitions | | 6 |
| SDG Accessibility Committee | | 7 |
| Summary of Actions 2022 | | 8 |
| Summary of Actions 2023 | | 10 |
| Summary of Proposed Actions 2024 | | 12 |
| Other Proposed Actions 2024 – 2027 (no established date for completion) | | 12 |
| Appendix A – Photos | | 13 |

A Message from the Mayor

The Council of the Township of North Dundas is very pleased to present our most recent Accessibility Plan for our municipality.

The Township is committed to accommodating any person with a disability regardless of whether they are an employee, volunteer, resident or visitor. Ultimately, the accessibility plan is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede a person from accessing and using municipal services within the responsibility of the Township of North Dundas.

In May 2023, The Township was selected for an Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) desk audit by the Ontario government. The following were examined:

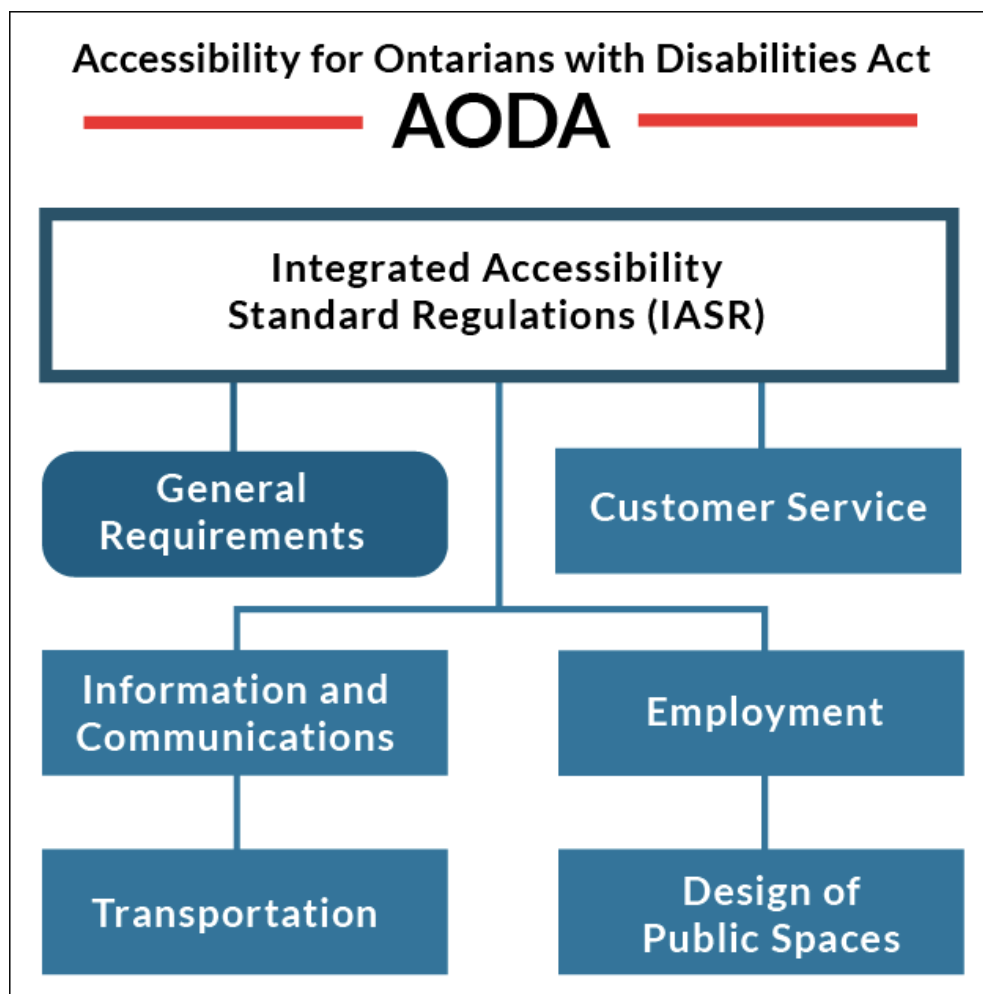
1. Accessibility Policies
2. Multi-year Accessibility Plan
3. Training
4. Accessible Feedback
5. Emergency Procedure, Plans, or Public Safety Information
6. Accessibility Compliance Reports
7. Recreational Trails, Consultation
8. Recreation Trails, Signage and Media
9. Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas and Play Spaces
10. Exterior Paths of Travel, Pedestrian Signals and Rest Area
11. Off-Street Parking, Minimum Number and Type of Accessible Parking Spaces
12. Service Counters, Fixed Queuing Guides, and Waiting Areas

I am pleased to report that we were compliant with all areas that were applicable to North Dundas.

I would like to close by welcoming the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SD&G) Accessibility Committee. This newly formed Committee has representatives from all of the lower tier municipalities in SDG. Council and staff look forward to working with you and appreciate your time and dedication in helping to make our community accessible to everyone.

Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) requires private and not-for-profit organizations with 50 or more employees, to create a multi-year accessibility plan and develop accessibility policies according to established standards in five areas. The AODA has several standards governed by different legislations (see chart below) with varying dates for mandatory compliance.



Source: <https://accessibilitycanada.ca>

1. **General Requirements** – In addition to the five standards that all non-profits, private and public sector businesses must comply with, there are also general requirements that include:
 - Training – Ensuring employees have the basic knowledge about accessibility and how it impacts people with disabilities, and keeping records about the training received.
 - An accessibility policy – A written policy that is available to the public that guides an organization and helps with achieving accessibility goals.
 - An accessibility plan – A plan that works with the above-mentioned policy that

outlines steps to prevent and remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities and the timeline for implementing these steps.

- Self-service kiosks – Electronic terminals must include accessibility features when they are designed, procured or acquired.
2. **Standard One - Customer Service Standards (CSS)** – The standard for customer service has been in effect since 2008, and requires organizations to develop policies and a plan on how to provide services to persons with a disability. Under CSS only the information about services needs to be accessible, not the services themselves. Additionally, contact information in multiple formats (phone number, email, address) must be available to collect feedback on accessibility practices. This standard applies to all organizations in Ontario that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties that has at least one employee in Ontario.
 3. **Standard Two - Information and Communications** – All emergency and public safety information must be provided in an accessible format when asked, including websites which must comply with Web Content Accessibility Standards (WCAG).
 4. **Standard Three - Employment Standards** – All internal communications and workplace information must be accessible to all employees. Employees with disabilities must have individualized workplace emergency response information. Recruitment must be accessible to everyone and accommodations must be made to meet the needs of employees throughout their career, including individual accommodation plans and return-to-work plans for employees absent due to a disability.
 5. **Standard Four - Transportation** – Organizations providing transportation services must have accessible options for people with disabilities. The Township of North Dundas is not responsible for any form of public transportation; therefore, this standard will not be addressed in this plan.
 6. **Standard Five - Design of Public Spaces** – These standards are still being developed. Since 2015, The Ontario Building Code (OBC) requires that minimum accessibility standards be met for most new construction and extensive renovations to existing buildings. There is a baseline for level of accessibility for service counters, waiting areas with fixed seating and outdoor spaces, such as sidewalks and parking lots; however, like the OBC, these standards only apply to new construction and planned redevelopment of public spaces.

Standard five requires municipalities to consult with people with disabilities in certain circumstances to develop design solutions that reflect local conditions and meet the needs of all users. Consultation is required when an organization plans to construct or redevelop:

- Recreational trails
- Beach access routes
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Playgrounds and outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel

- Service counters
- Waiting areas with fixed seating
- Sidewalks
- Parking lots

Under the standard, municipalities must consult with the public and persons with disabilities in addition to consulting with their municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee. This consultation should occur as early as possible in the construction or redevelopment process so that the Township can weigh all considerations before decisions are made and design plans are finalized.

The standard also allows for consultations to be combined on varying projects to allow for efficient and effective decision-making. As part of the municipality's systemic compliance, accessibility planning has been incorporated into the Official Plan process, and the Township manages a Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Under the CIP program, businesses can apply for grants to modify their premises to improve accessibility.

Our public spaces are inspected regularly. Any preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces is handled by our Recreation and Culture Department. Issues that need to be resolved are entered into our internal tracking system and assigned to the appropriate personnel for completion. If necessary, access to accessible elements is barricaded to protect public safety until returned to working order. Issues brought forward by the Public are entered into the same system.

Definitions

The definition shown below clearly indicates that a “disability” may include physical limitations, mental or developmental limitations and other non-evident limitations.

A “*disability*” is:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) A mental disorder; or,
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

A “*barrier*” is:

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Source: *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) Accessibility Committee

In 2023, an SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee was established to jointly serve the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the six lower tier municipalities. The Committee is comprised of 1 lay person from each of the 6 local municipalities comprising SDG. Each member shall be appointed by their local municipality and the majority of the Committee membership shall be held by persons with disabilities.

The mandate of the SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee is to advise the Councils of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, the Township of North Dundas, the Municipality of South Dundas, the Township of North Stormont, the Township of South Stormont, the Township of North Glengarry and the Township of South Glengarry on identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.

The role of the SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee will include reviewing and advising the Councils on the following areas, as they pertain to accessibility:

- Requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and any other applicable legislation
- Provide advice on the preparation and implementation of annual and multi-year accessibility plans in order to remove barriers for people with disabilities and ensure that no new barriers are created
- Promote awareness of accessibility and inclusion

The key contacts for the Township of North Dundas regarding accessibility are:

Nancy Johnston, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
Township of North Dundas
636 St. Lawrence Street, Winchester, Ontario K0C 2K0
Phone: 613-774-2105 Toll Free: 1-800-795-0437 Fax: 613-774-5699
Email: njohnston@northdundas.com

Meaghan Meerburg, Director of Recreation and Culture
Township of North Dundas
636 St. Lawrence Street, Winchester, Ontario K0C 2K0
Phone: 613-774-2105 Toll Free: 1-800-795-0437 Fax: 613-774-5699
Email: mmeerburg@northdundas.com

In order for staff to determine if the established targets to address the removal of barriers have been completed, annual reviews are conducted. A summary of recent actions completed are included in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and updates of yearly activities are posted on the website.

Summary of Actions – 2022

Customer Service Standard

The standard outlines requirements for removing barriers for people with disabilities so they can access goods, services, and/or facilities.

1. Newly hired Township employees receive mandatory training on Accessible Customer Service. The Township also provides this training to volunteers.
2. The Township of launched a completely new website in the spring of 2021 which is compliant with Level AA of the WCAG 2.0 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which meets the requirements in the AODA. Staff continue to review documents posted on the website and update for accessibility, where required. We are in the process of converting PDF documents into searchable PDF documents to increase accessibility.

Information and Communications

The standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that are accessible for people with disabilities.

1. The Township provides documents in accessible formats upon request and has notifications to this effect on the website.
2. Council meetings continue to be broadcast virtually through Zoom and are live streamed through the Township's YouTube Channel. This change has made it easier for public participation for those who were unable to attend meetings in person.

Employment Standard

The standard requires that employers must make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities.

1. Accessibility accommodations were available throughout the recruitment process and employment life cycle, including:
 - Notification to the public that accommodations will be provided upon request.
 - Notification welcoming accommodations throughout the recruitment process and employment life cycle.
2. Continued purchase of ergonomic equipment for staff as required.

Design of Public Spaces

The design of public spaces standard outlines the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for people with disabilities.

1. **Winchester Centennial Pool, 577 Winchester Main Street, Winchester**

- Purchased/reconfigured existing bathroom stalls to become AODA compliant.
- Purchased touch free taps.
- Replaced and lowered bathroom counters.
- Purchased and installed AODA bathroom mirrors.
- Replaced main entrance door with a wider door and smaller frame so the opening becomes 36".
- Converted two parking spaces into one accessible parking space located within close proximity to the paved path leading to the Lions Club Pavilion and pool building.

2. **Other**

- Additional accessible play structures and accessible pathways installed in various parks.
- Accessible spinning playground components and accessible pathways installed based on proximity to parking lot.
- A flat & hard path of travel was included in the construction of the new Queen's Jubilee Butterfly Garden, in the Mountain Memorial Park.

3. **Sidewalks**

- One crosswalk was installed in Winchester at Christie Lane and Main Street and another crosswalk was installed in Chesterville at Church Street and Main Street. Tactile plates on the sidewalks were installed as part of these crosswalks.
- Tactile plates were installed at various locations around the Winchester Public School.

Summary of Actions – 2023

Customer Service Standard

The standard outlines requirements for removing barriers for people with disabilities so they can access goods, services, and/or facilities.

1. Newly hired Township employees receive mandatory training on Accessible Customer Service. An HR training platform is used to ensure that the content is up-to-date.
2. A volunteer policy and program for the Township was developed. All volunteers who are accepted are required to complete training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act either on-line at www.aoda.ca or through the Township.

Information and Communications

The standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that are accessible for people with disabilities.

1. The Township provides documents in accessible formats upon request and has notifications to this effect on the website.
2. Council meetings continue to be broadcast virtually through Zoom and are livestreamed through the Township's YouTube Channel. This continues to make it easier for public participation for those who are unable to attend meetings in person.
3. Council meeting agendas and minutes are posted in an accessible format on the Township website for public viewing.
4. A Link to the Township's AODA information page was added to the footer of our website and placed on the homepage.

Employment Standards

The standard requires that employers must make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities.

1. Accessibility accommodations were available throughout the recruitment process and employment life cycle, including:
 - Notification to the public that accommodations will be provided upon request.
 - Notification welcoming accommodations throughout the recruitment process and employment life cycle.
2. Continued purchase of ergonomic equipment for staff as required, such as ergonomic mouses, keyboards, and stand-up desks.

Design of Public Spaces

The design of public spaces standard outlines the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for people with disabilities.

1. Community Parks and Halls

- An AODA compliant play feature was installed in the Chesterville Community Park.
- Engineered wood fibre was topped-up in various playgrounds.
- The Township rented accessible portable washroom units for the Chesterville sports fields, the 100 Club Park sports fields, the Rick Cauvier Memorial Park, and the Chesterville tennis courts.
- Design work on the Hallville Community Park continued, including plans for a universal washroom, paved pathways, and an AODA compliant play structure and ground prep. These plans were shared with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the general public.
- The fire alarm system in Morewood Community Hall was replaced complete with visual and audible alarms.

2. Pathways

- Constructed a paved pathway in Sandy Row subdivision park. The pathway leads from the subdivision street, back to the riverfront, where a square picnic table with 3 bench seats was installed on a hard, flat surface. The 4th side of the picnic table has no bench, so that a stroller or mobility device can be at the table.
- Replaced a section of paved pathway in Harmony Park due to erosion. The balance will be completed next year.
- Parking spaces are being repainted at several locations so that the paint remains bright and easily identified. This includes AODA parking spaces.
- Sidewalk repairs were made at several locations. Curb ramps and tactile plates were installed if required.

3. Other

- Tendered for three (3) AODA compliant play structures complete with AODA approved ground base (engineered wood fiber) for Oshmann Park, James Street Park, and Hallville Community Park.
- Tendered pavilions for the Hallville Community Park, Oshmann Park, and a potential new dog park in Chesterville, which are planned to include AODA compliant picnic tables.
- Installed AODA sensor tap in the Old Town Hall washroom.
- Installed AODA sensor taps in each change room in the Chesterville Public Pool house.

Summary of Proposed Actions – 2024

Customer Service Standard

- All new employees will receive mandatory training on Accessible Customer Service.

Information and Communications

- The Township will continue to broadcast meetings virtually and post accessible Council meeting agenda packages on the website.

Employment Standard

- Accessibility accommodations will be available throughout the recruitment process and included as part of our advertisements.
- Continued purchase of ergonomic equipment for staff as required.

Design of Public Spaces

- Install another accessible washroom at Old Town Hall (transferred from 2023)
- Install accessible playgrounds for Community Parks that were tendered out in 2023.
- Continue to provide accessible portable washrooms in the parks that are AODA compliant.
- Add curb ramps and/or tactile plates to sidewalks as required if budgeted.

Other Proposed Actions – 2024 - 2027 (no established date)

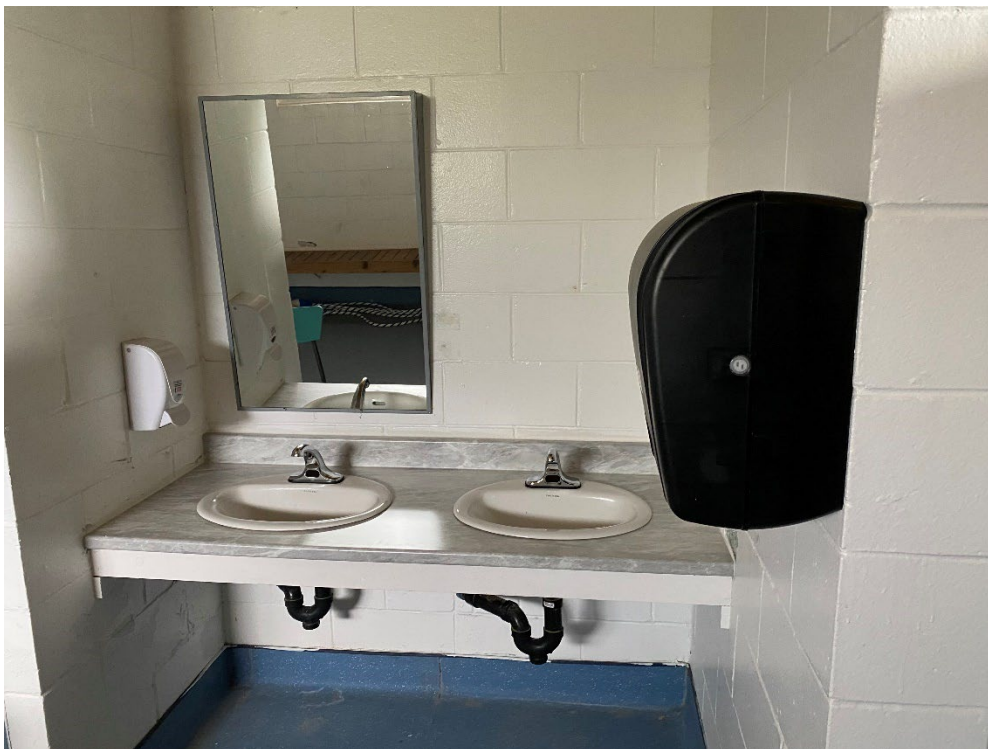
Design of Public Spaces

- Install handrails in the theatre at Old Town Hall in Winchester
- Replace sections of sidewalks throughout the Township – areas to be determined during budget process.
- Majority of the playgrounds will aim be AODA compliant in the next few years.
- Construct a paved pathway through Thompson Park in Chesterville.
- Construct a paved pathway in the Chesterville Community Park that leads from the parking lot to the pavilion and to the new AODA park features.
- Plan to re-pave the pathway by Drew Drive in South Mountain, as well as re-pave the remaining pathway in Harmony Park.

Appendix A – Photos of Some Improvements from 2022- 20233



AODA compliant play feature was installed in three parks



Lowered the vanity and towel rack and installed a tilted mirror and sensor taps at the Winchester Centennial Pool



Pathway at the Jubilee Butterfly Garden in the Mountain Memorial Park officially opened in 2022



Half Bay Swing frames to accommodate one AODA Compliant swing were installed in five parks



New pathway in the passive park in the Sandy Row subdivision – South Mountain



Rick Cauvier Park Pavillion



AODA Compliant Picnic Tables – Rick Cauvier Park Pavillion