



Terms of Reference - Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee

(Revised July 2023)

County Core Values

Our Vision:

To bring together people, partnerships and possibilities for a strong and vibrant Northumberland County

Our Mission:

To be a best practices leader of county government and a collaborative partner with our member municipalities and community partners

Core Values:

- Care & Support
- Collaboration & Communication
- Honesty & Integrity
- Innovation & Excellence
- Mutual trust & Respect
- Accountability

Description

The Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee (NAAC) is a committee established by County Council for the County of Northumberland as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Committee provides recommendations to Council to make it easier for people with disabilities to access its programs, services, and facilities. The NAAC reports to Council through the Corporate Support Standing Committee.

Definitions

Advisory Committee means a committee created by County Council to act in an advisory capacity on a specific matter of municipal interest.

“Barrier” means 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 information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

“Council” means the Council of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland

“County” means the Corporation of the County of Northumberland, an upper-tier level of municipal government.

“Disability” means,

- 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; (“handicap”)

“Legislation” or **“Accessibility Legislation”** means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as amended, or its associated Regulations, as amended, as applicable.

Staff Liaison means the County of Northumberland staff member responsible for providing clerical, administrative and technical assistance to the Committee to ensure the proper functioning of the Committee.

“Terms of Reference” means a document outlining a Committee’s mandate and administrative details, including composition, meeting structure, and any specific characteristics that are necessary for the Committee’s operations.

Committee Mandate

The Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee (NAAC) is a volunteer Advisory Committee established by County Council in accordance with the AODA and the Terms of Reference.

The NAAC will provide advice, recommendations and support to County Council and County departments regarding the development, implementation, and maintenance of an accessibility plan in accordance with the AODA. The NAAC supports the implementation of accessibility legislation and provides feedback and advice on creating, improving and maintaining access to County services and facilities for people with disabilities.

Duties

The primary objectives of the NAAC as outlined in the AODA 2005, c. 11, S 29 (4) and O. Reg. 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards are to:

- Advise Council on the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and other such matters for which Council or County staff may seek its advice.
- Review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act, that the Committee selects.
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.
- Provide recommendations to Council and County Departments on the development, implementation review and update of the County's multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation O. Reg. 191/11, S. 4 (2).
- Participate in consultation requirements on the County's development and redevelopment projects as required under the Design of Public Spaces Standard: O. Reg. 191/11, s. 80.8 (Recreational trails); O. Reg. 191/11, s.80.19 (Outdoor play spaces), O. Reg. 191/11, s.80.29 (Exterior paths of travel, rest areas); O. Reg. 191/11, s.80.39 (On-street parking spaces).

In addition, the NAAC shall:

- Provide feedback on the County's annual accessibility status update on the progress of the measures taken to implement the County's multi-year accessibility plan.
- Identify and recommend measures for the removal and prevention of barriers within the County's programs, services, and facilities.
- Contribute to the County's accessibility awareness activities.

Duty of Council

As outlined in the AODA, 2005, c. 11, s. 29 (5), Council shall seek advice from the NAAC on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure, or premises,

- That the Council purchases, constructs or significantly renovates;
- For which the Council enters into a new lease; or
- That a person provides a municipal capital facility under an agreement entered into with the Council in accordance with section 110 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

Council may assign other roles and responsibilities to the Committee; however, Council must ensure that the Committee is still able to meet its legal responsibilities.

Committee Membership

Composition

The NAAC shall be comprised of 7-10 members appointed by Council as follows:

- 4-7 citizen members who are residents and/or ratepayers of the County, being a minimum of 18 years of age and not an employee of the County.
- 1 member of Northumberland County Council. The Council representative shall have full voting privileges.
- 2 members who are professionals from community agencies/organizations with mandates to serve and/or support people with disabilities and who serve residents of Northumberland County. Agency representatives may reside outside of Northumberland County.

In addition,

- A majority of the members of the NAAC shall be people with disabilities (AODA, 2005, c. 11, s. 29 (3).)
- Members may be selected by the NAAC to achieve a broader representation from areas across the County, the types of disabilities, and/or lived experience of people with disabilities.
- Where a vacancy occurs from any cause, causing the membership to fall below 7 members, the recruitment process will begin, and the NAAC shall appoint new member(s) to sit on the Committee for the remainder of the term.

Qualifications

Committee members must:

- be residents of and/or property owners within the County of Northumberland.
- have awareness and knowledge of the AODA and its Standards.
- have familiarity with the County's goods, services, and facilities.
- have expertise in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers.
- have awareness and knowledge of disability and accessibility issues.

Term of Office

Committee membership aligns with the term of Council. Committee membership will expire December 31 of a municipal election year. The term of office for the Council representative will expire on November 14th of a municipal election year.

Committee members may serve for 2 consecutive 4-year terms, or where a committee member was appointed mid-term, for a total of 8 years. A committee member may be permitted to serve additional terms at the discretion of Council.

Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Annually, and at the first meeting of the Committee after new appointments have been made, the Committee shall select a Chair and Vice-Chair from among its membership for a period of 1 year, which may be repeated. Members of Council and municipal staff supporting the Committee are not eligible to assume the positions of Chair or Vice-Chair.

The Chair provides leadership to the Committee, ensures that the Committee carries out its mandate, and acts as the primary liaison between the Committee and Staff. If the chair is temporarily absent, the Vice-Chair will assume the position and responsibilities for the Chair in the interim. If the position of Chair becomes vacant, the Vice-Chair shall assume the responsibilities of the Chair until a new Chair can be elected. If the position of Vice-Chair becomes vacant the Chair may appoint a member of the committee as interim Vice-Chair until a new Vice-Chair can be elected. Election, when required, will be held at the next meeting of the Committee.

Committee Meetings

Meeting Frequency, Schedule, and Format

The Committee will meet on the second Thursday of the month (except for July, August and December). Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chair.

Exceptions to this may include:

- During a municipal election, meetings may be cancelled in the last quarter of the year.
- Where quorum is not reached.
- When circumstances warrant special considerations.

Committee meetings may be held in person at County headquarters, virtually or a hybrid format.

Committee members must conduct themselves in a manner that aligns with the County's Core Values.

Quorum

A majority of the voting members appointed to the committee will constitute a quorum. 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 deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

Committee Resolution

Recommendations and decisions reached by the Committee must be based on consensus wherever possible. If a consensus cannot be reached and there are different opinions on the issue, the Chair may call for a formal vote by show of hands. Decisions will be carried by a simple majority of the voting members present.

Recommendations are "carried" when supported by a majority. Only recommendations as they appear in the adopted minutes can be considered as officially representing the positions of the Committee.

The NAAC is an Advisory Committee and provides recommendations, information, and advice to County Council. The NAAC does not exercise decision-making powers and County Council is mandated to make final decisions regarding Advisory Committee recommendations.

Public participation

All committee meetings are open to the public.

Members of the public are not permitted to participate in committee discussions but may appear as a delegation.

Delegations

Delegations are welcome to attend meetings of the NAAC for issues that fall within the guidelines of these terms of reference. Delegations may address the Committee for 5 minutes and the Committee may grant an additional 5 minutes. Any person wishing to appear before the committee as a delegation must submit a request to the Accessibility

Coordinator, advising of the topic or item they wish to speak. All requests for delegations must be received at least one week before the meeting to ensure the delegation is included in the agenda.

Staff Liaison / Committee Support

The Accessibility Coordinator shall provide clerical, administrative and technical assistance to the Committee, as deemed appropriate by the Director of Corporate Services, to ensure the proper functioning of the Committee. Specifically, the Accessibility Coordinator will provide the following resources to the Committee:

- Prepare and forward meeting materials to members.
- Prepare meeting minutes and Committee correspondence.
- Coordinate involvement of County Departments.
- Provide professional advice on matters within the mandate of the Committee.
- Assist the committee in participating in events and activities related to its mandate.

Generally, committee members are selected to be able to carry out the mandate of the committee. Staff resources are provided only to assist the committee in undertaking their mandate. Additional requests of staff resources, such as original research, or organization of events, shall be at the discretion of the Director of Corporate Services and within staff, time, and budget constraints.

The minutes of each committee meeting will be amended as necessary and approved at the following meeting. The approved minutes will be included in the next regularly scheduled Corporate Support Standing Committee meeting and Council meeting cycle.

Committee meeting agendas will be prepared by the Accessibility Coordinator with input from the Committee Chair

Absences

To maintain a high level of commitment, members may be required to resign if they have been absent for 3 consecutive meetings without good cause.

Reporting Structure

Activities of the Committee will be reported by the staff liaison to County Council through the Corporate Support Standing Committee through the circulation of meeting minutes. The NAAC agendas and minutes are posted publicly on the County's website.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and amended in the 4th year of every Council Term. County Council will have the authority to make changes to the Terms of Reference as required.

Previous update: 2014

Revised: July 2023