

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
July 24, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS

Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting

This meeting is open to the public. It will not be livestreamed on YouTube



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1. Call to Order
 2. Attendance and Introductions (Two new members)
 3. Announcements
 4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – May 29, 2025
 6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Work Plan
 - b) Video Project
 7. New Business
 - a) Alternate Meeting Location(s) Discussion
 8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
May 29, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS

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WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
May 29, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS



Present:

Michel Bourgeois, Resident Member
Denise Long, Resident Member
Councillor Chrystal Remme
Tina McKay, Building & Fire Official
Melissa MacAskill, Resident Member
Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant

Roseanna Boyd, Resident Member
Kathy Johnston, Manager of Recreation & Community Engagement
Jordan Stephens, Resident Member
Katie Rose, HR Manager
Jennifer Davison, Resident Member

1. Call to Order – Chair Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 6:00pm
2. Attendance – Quorum was reached
3. Announcements including Land and Cultural Acknowledgements and a Code of Conduct statement.

Round table introductions were made for WHRM’s HR Manager Katie Rose, new to the committee.

Follow-up engagement has been scheduled now that the Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Strategy Plan is Council-approved. There will be a community meeting on June 26, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Three Mile Plains Community Hall. Chair Bourgeois is away. If committee members are interested in attending, please let Chair Bourgeois and Clerk Snair know. Councillor Remme indicated that she would be attending. Clerk Snair is working to schedule a similar event with Glooscap.

Thanks were extended to Staff Member McKay who sent out some great information on funding sources for the built environment.

4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
The Agenda was accepted as presented.
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
The April 23, 2025 meeting minutes were accepted as presented.
6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Work Plan

The draft work plan was shared as part of the meeting package. Chair Bourgeois reviewed the seven proposed action items with the committee.

Discussion points included:

- Under “Inventory and Assessment of Curbside Accessible Parking Spaces, clarification was requested regarding CSA (Canadian Standards Association) and where CSA standards can be found (Google “CSA”).
- Existing parking spaces would be identified. Capture what we have, where they are, what is needed to bring them up to standard, and if any should be relocated.
- The community could help identify spaces and also help identify future needs. A good awareness exercise.
- Parking spaces are not included as part of the Active Transportation Plan.
- This could be as simple as painting / signage. Not a huge budget cost.
- The Sports Complex is cited as not having enough accessible spaces.
- Going above and beyond the standard is encouraged. For example, if six accessible spaces are required within a project’s design scope, the municipality could make it a practice to request eight spaces. This would have to be included as part of the tender process.
- For the item “Include Accessibility in Staff Reports to Council” it was noted that not every report will require an accessibility lens.
- Through the PAC (Planning Advisory Committee), possibly introduce the idea of providing a bonus (such as increased density) for developers if accessibility is well considered (above and beyond).
- Updating all municipal documents, website and correspondence to plain language.
- Regarding “Establish a Pre-Tender Review Process of WHRM Capital Projects for Accessibility” it was noted that this can apply to buildings/structures, not just streets.
- This accessibility review would hard-wire the cost of accessibility into the project.
- In order to get to the gold standard as endorsed by Council, we would need to hire a Rick Hansen-certified consultant.
- For the item “Website Accessibility Review”, WCAG 2.0 (Website Content Accessibility Guidelines) was identified as the standard. This information will be forwarded as we are in the process of revamping the municipal website.
- In relation to “Inventory and Assessment of WHRM Facilities”, the consensus was that the committee can assist with data collection, depending on the scope. Get a template established to determine what we are looking for and maintain a consistent standard.

- The committee has informally audited approximately four municipal sites. To continue these audits would require staff and committee time
- Regarding “Provide Guidance and Recognition of Local Businesses and Community Groups and Events”, there is opportunity for the committee to be a resource.
- Regarding “Create Videos Highlighting Accessibility Features and Related Experiences”, it was mentioned that this project is already underway. Council approval is not required, but they should be aware.

Next steps would be to finalize a realistic work plan that could be presented in an information report to Council. Are there items that need to be added or removed from this draft plan? Do we need to tighten up any language?

Regarding facility inventory and assessment, how do we prioritize these assessments and ensure that reporting is followed through to budget in a timely manner? The front counter assessment at 76 Morison is cited as an example where there was no follow-up. Meaningful audits require time. How do we move it to the next phase?

A suggestion was made to establish a policy first. Then build in things like inventory list updates, established timelines for assessments and levels of accountability. Task staff with creating the policy. Frame it around the intention of what we are looking to do (Strategic Action #4). Include in the information report as an actionable item. Add “create policy” for this item in the work plan under Performance Indicators.

It was also suggested that including accessibility as a consideration on the staff report template for reports to Council start right away, an easy go-forward. This will immediately increase awareness and visibility. Accessibility consultations will be prioritized before a project begins. Give staff a consistent checklist when writing reports and considering accessibility impacts.

Regarding accessible municipal parking it was determined that this item would be kept in. As Staff Member Burgess could provide valuable information here, this item was put on hold for his input. Chair Bourgeois will reach out to him via email.

Regarding the pre-tender review, there is opportunity for going above and beyond at the pre-tendering phase.

Regarding the website accessibility review, as we are in the process of updating the website, it is a great time to bring it up with the developer. We need to confirm the accessibility standard being used and see if we can achieve WCAG 2.0. Staff Member Johnston will email the developer for more

information and copy Chair Bourgeois. This item will remain in the work plan with more information to follow. Ensure staff who maintain the website are properly trained and follow a standardized approach. This is important for all communications along with the plain language component.

There was a suggestion to change the “Inventory and Assessment of WHRM Facilities” to “Create a Policy (updates, timelines, accountability)” and move the inventory and assessment component to one of the other columns within that section.

There was a question as to how we measure the “Guidance and Recognition” item. Getting Council out to events would be a goal. Create a sticker along the lines of the Inspired Business Program with an accessibility component or a sister program focused on the accessibility component. Could even wrap it into the existing program.

Areas where businesses could benefit from guidance include garbage placement and entryway ramps. This year’s Apple Blossom Festival organizers did a good job of making accommodation for accessible parking at festival events. This could be something the committee assists event organizers with in our region and could be included as part of the work plan. It was suggested to have an Accessibility Committee representative join the Special Events Committee.

The Accessibility Committee currently does not have its own email address. This is something to consider, along with creating a committee business card that could be handed out. Plain language resource handouts for businesses and event organizers could be developed by the committee.

The Planning Department has created plain language handouts for people building secondary suites, universal washrooms, etc. There is a built environment standards handout for festivals that is very easy to read, providing a plain language overview.

It was suggested the above-mentioned information could be compiled and given a dedicated spot on our website. Ideally, with an Accessibility icon on the home page.

It was suggested to change last item on the draft work plan to “Awareness Building” and shift the video component to fall under this initiative.

b) Video Project

Staff Member Johnston advised that this project is still in the initial planning stage, with opportunity for committee members to provide input. She and Resident Member Stephens

are working towards launching the videos during the month of May, 2026. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Awareness Week falls in that month. The goal would be to release a longer (maximum one-minute) kickoff video, then a new 20 - 30 second video every day for the entire month.

The focus would be showing people in the community that they have a part to play, creating awareness and inspiring change.

7. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

Thursday, July 24, 2025 was proposed as the next meeting date, location to be determined.

Moved by Resident Member Davison and Staff Member Johnston that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

X

Committee Chair

X

Municipal Clerk

DRAFT

Please find a summary of proposed Work Plan items for discussion. This is not necessarily the ‘final’ list and if there are other items that anyone wants to discuss, let’s do that!

While we do need to be aware of the broader impacts on budgets and other resources, it is important to provide Council with suggestions on how to meet the commitments of “the plan”.

The timeframe on some items may end up being longer than expected. That could mean that there is an information gathering phase that may better inform an implementation phase in a subsequent fiscal year. The completion date of some items would be budget dependant, so the start date is easier to commit to.

Remember, whatever “Work Plan” we agree to submit, we still have opportunities to do other things. I encourage anyone who has an idea to share. We do need to make sure that our activities align with the goals of the Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Plan. That provides ample opportunities for initiative.

Action Item	Alignment with Accessibility Plan	Resources Required	Time Frame	Desired Outcome	Performance Indicators (How will accomplishments be measured)
Inventory and assessment of curbside accessible parking spaces	Strategic Action #10	Municipal Staff AAC	2025-28	Have existing accessible parking meet CSA-B651 standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete inventory • Determine if location can meet standard • Implement upgrades
Include Accessibility in Staff Reports to Council	Strategic Action #4	Municipal Staff AAC	2025-27	Have the template for reports to Council include Accessibility as one of the considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practices • Adopt • Implement • Review
Establish a pre-tender review process of WHRM Capital Projects for accessibility	Strategic Action #4	Municipal Staff AAC	2025-26	Capital Projects will be reviewed with a dedicated accessibility lens prior to tender being issued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map process • Establish review group • Implement

Website Accessibility Review	Strategic Action # 18	Municipal Staff AAC	2025-2028	The WHRM website should meet WCAG 2.0 standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current status • incremental upgrades • WCAG 2.0
Inventory and assessment of WHRM Facilities	Strategic Action # 4	Municipal Staff AAC	2026-2030	An accurate inventory of WHRM Facilities and the accessibility of each.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine scope • Establish process • Status Reports
Provide Guidance and Recognition of Local Businesses and Community Groups and events.	Strategic Action # 5	AAC Municipal Staff	2025-2028	Provide non-binding guidance on accessibility enhancements. Public Recognition of same	To be determined
Create Videos highlighting Accessibility features and related experiences	Strategic Action # 5	AAC Municipal Staff	2025-ongoing	Build awareness by creating media	To be determined

- **Conduct an inventory/assessment of curbside accessible parking spaces.**
 - The Committee should understand how and why accessible curbside parking locations are determined.
 - Capture location, current condition, including a broad scope of work to achieve CSA-B651 standard
 - This would require staff time and expertise. AAC could assist as appropriate
 - Costing compiled from unit pricing in existing agreements or issued for tender. Schedule depends on funding.
 - There is value in completing the inventory as a first step.

- **Include Accessibility in Staff Report Template:**

- The complexity in this initiative is establishing a checklist for report authors, appropriate to WHRM's

This would help keep accessibility in play when Council is considering action. It is understood that some reports would have no relevant accessibility impact.

This requires a broader understanding of what concerns should be identified. Report authors could be required to describe all considerations and actions taken by staff to assess potential accessibility impacts which result from proposed policies and projects. Any consultations on accessibility matters, including consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee would be recorded in a "Consultation" section of the report. It is the responsibility of the originating department to complete the Accessibility Impacts section of the report template.

All reports must be reviewed by the originating department to ensure that accessibility is considered in the early stages of initiatives, and to track the development and integration of accessibility features. Reports ranging from site plan approval, the implementation of new infrastructure or a new facility, plans to expand a recreation centre, and alterations of operational service standards or programming, all require a thorough consideration of accessibility impacts. There are examples of a report author 'checklist' that could provide general guidance. (i.e. City of Ottawa)

- **Review existing Pre-Tender Review process to explore opportunities to effectively identify accessibility components.**

The pre-tender stage is a foundational phase in the tendering process, setting the groundwork for a successful project. It begins with the identification of the project need, where stakeholders define the scope and objectives. This stage involves consultation with stakeholders, coordination of effort and identification of areas of overlap with other projects. This process helps ensure alignment with strategic goals in a proactive manner. Stakeholders must consider various factors such as budget constraints, regulatory requirements, and environmental impacts.

- **If a similar process exists**, review for effectiveness. (scope, stakeholders etc.)
- **If no such policy exists**, establish a documented process for review of Capital Projects by a range of stakeholders. This can avoid missed opportunities and improve communication, resulting in better results that align with WHRM's commitment to accessibility.

- **Improve WHRM website accessibility**

The WHRM website is an important point of access for information. Improvements are needed to make it more accessible and user friendly. Work is currently underway to improve the website; however, it's unlikely this work would bring the website into compliance with

accessibility standards. A jurisdictional scan should be undertaken to explore and identify resources available to assist and make improvements to be more accessible.

- Identify if in-house resources exist to bring website to **WCAG 2.0 standard*(to be confirmed)**
 - If resources do not exist, explore options for contractor, temporary staff or establishing a dedicated Communication position.
 - **In the interim, there may be opportunities to make strategic upgrades that improve the user experience.**
- **Accessibility Review of existing WHRM buildings and facilities.** *This initiative only includes WHRM facilities. The Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Plan does not speak to private facilities and residential developments. While the Plan does **encourage** inclusion of accessibility features in all buildings and spaces, the Building Code enforcement and inspection process is outside of the Plan's scope. No change in that process is proposed as part of this Work Plan.

To achieve the goals outlined in the West Hants Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Plan, the Committee recommends the following.

- Establish scope of inventory (Facilities, Parks and Open Spaces etc.)
 - Identify criteria for accessibility review.
 - Determine how WHRM will meet the goals of the plan on its own new builds and major renos. (Commitment to strive for Rick Hansen Gold Certification)
 - As inventory is complete, improvements could take advantage of economies of scale vs one site at a time.
- **Offer Guidance and Recognition of Local Businesses and Community Groups and events.**

*This is a combination of Sub-Actions 5.1/5.2/5.3

- Provide practical guidance and support to local businesses and community groups to enhance the accessibility of their built environment and events.
- **Create Videos highlighting Accessibility features and related experiences**
Awareness of Accessibility would be enhanced by the creation of media (video/print etc.). This initiative would highlight accomplishments and showcase opportunities for improvement.
These videos posted online could link to an embedded form providing an opportunity for feedback. Any data collected could be then used to inform subsequent decisions and processes.

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