



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☐	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: Mayor Zebian and WHRM Council

Submitted by: Paul Wheadon
Councillor District 4

Date: October 20, 2026

Subject: Amendments/additions to planning review documents

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

MGA (Nova Scotia)- Part VIII (planning and development) and part IX (subdivision) The MGA provides council with the authority to adopt and amend Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-Laws and Subdivision By-Laws , and to establish subdivision standards that support public safety, sustainable development, Municipal service delivery and the creation of safe and viable communities.

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

That council direct staff to prepare the amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, land use by-law, subdivision by-law, and any other applicable municipal policies to establish the following minimum standards for future developments requiring:

- 1. Development Agreement required for proposed developments over 10 lots in General Resource Zones or Hamlets.*
- 2. A provincially standardized Secondary emergency Access required for any proposed development over 100 lots.*
- 3. Require groundwater and well water studies to ensure capacity is available and not harmful to maintain supply for existing and future generations.*

BACKGROUND

Property	Public Opinion	Environment	Social	Economic	Councillor Activity
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Over the past few years, the planning and development review for the municipality has been amended, updated, and improved. Planning staff have done an exceptional job of working to complete an extensive, encompassing set of planning documents for the future of West Hants. There have been many community engagement sessions, on-line surveys and resident input and feed back.

The plan review documents have been a topic on several PAC/HAC agendas. Much review and discussion occurred as recently as September 24th and 25th, 2026 in a 2 day workshop with council, planning staff and PAC /HAC.

A community group from Ellershose presented concerns to committee of the whole October 13, 2026. This was a very articulate, and responsible presentation identifying areas of concern for future developments in the General Resource and Hamlet Zones.

This Community Group has been very respectful throughout the information sessions being held by potential developers, and likewise during their own meetings and presentations.

There are approximately 200 signs posted on Dawson Road and Ellershose.

Council has received many e mails highlighting concerns about future developments in there area and all of West Hants.

The group has a petition with over 400 signatures requesting council for action on these amendments.

Presently, WHRM planning is nearly at the finish line in regard to the documents.

This is the perfect time to ensure the basic minimum standards for development must be adhered to. Protecting existing water supplies and ensuring safe access must be priority in responsible future development in West Hants.

The recommendation is similar to that of Councils motion from July 28, 2026. This motion was also recommending amendments to the planning strategies.

The report was submitted by Councillor Leary-Pinch and the motion was passed.

DISCUSSION

The input and feedback from the Ellershouse Group is not new to large scale development and large projects in general. Water supply, Secondary road Access and responsible development is essential to ensuring safety and well being for our residents.

Halifax Regional Municipality and East Hants are already making similar requirements mandatory for developments in their regions.

If council agrees with the recommendations, planning staff can make the amendments and include them before coming back to PAC/HAC and council for review.

NEXT STEPS

Should the recommendations be supported, staff can

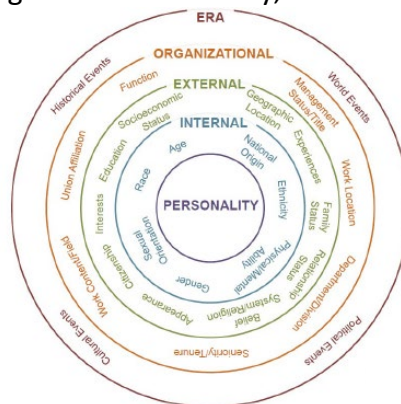
Amend and complete planning documents prior to completion and present the changes to PAC/HAC and Council .

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To be determined

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed amendments support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion by helping to ensure that all future developments are designed with the safety, accessibility and well-being of all Residents.



ALTERNATIVES

Should council not proceed with the proposed amendment;
Remain Status Quo using current planning regulations.

ATTACHMENTS

(List any attachment to the report, if anything.)

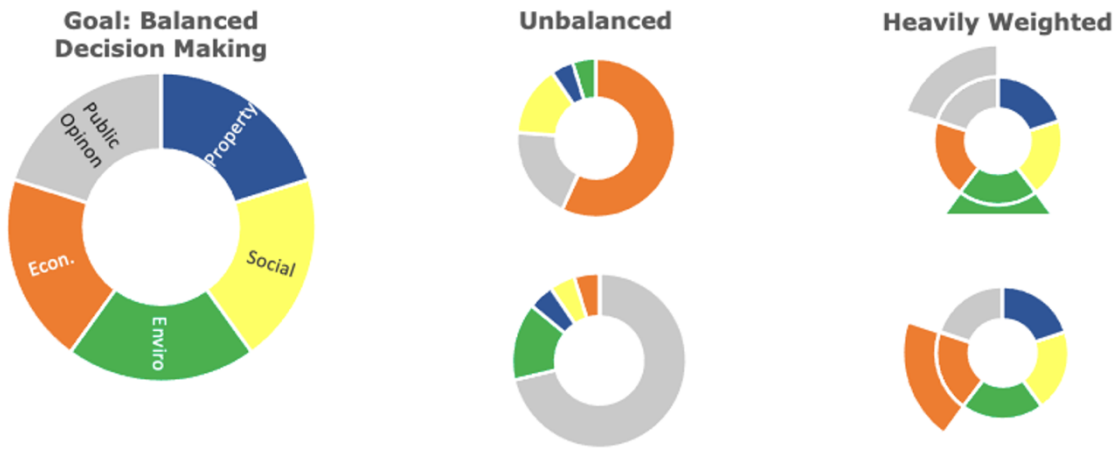
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

I encourage Council to continue to reflect upon planning policy changes as the regional plan is reviewed, as well when public comments are made. The Councillor identifies specific amendments that would increase the current level of oversight by Council for developments through the use of development agreements. This change is something Council should reflect upon vs a development policy style that promotes development “as of right” whereby Council approves the policies associated with development and administered by staff differs from a governance approval style.

The second and third recommendations help to address risks within the community associated with emergency access and drinking water. The matter of drinking water requires further reflection and discussion to determine what level of jurisdiction the WHRM wishes to administer on matters we are not traditionally enforcing. The introduction of such studies or “burden of proof” for the developer may require additional Municipal, resources or contribute additional costs to development to achieve the desired outcome. As noted in the report additional information is being considered regarding secondary access roads.

Raising these matters are positive and responsive to community feedback. I encourage Council to request additional information on the proposed changes if needed as well as include the proposed changes in the future discussions surrounding the Regional Plan as it proceeds through First Reading, Public Hearing and Secondary Reading stages.

Council has been provided with a reference taken from the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy , Appendix C “Decision Making by Council and Committee of the Whole” as a reminder of the principles highlighted for good decision making.



Report Reviewed by: 
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer