

Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee

West Hants Regional Municipality

June 9, 2025

To West Hants Regional Municipality Council,

Six months from now, the Winter Season arrives, and with it a significant risk of illness, injury, and loss of limb & life for West Hants Community members who are living rough (homeless). Homelessness disproportionately impacts equity-denied communities, including those who the DEICC represents and advocates for through the work of the Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Plan.

In the recently published Everyone Counts 2024 report on homelessness (Sweatman et al, 2024), the recommendations closely align with the goals of the Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Plan. Particularly, expanding emergency shelter options and supported housing and/or housing support workers; and increasing the availability of affordable housing (costing no more than 30% of the household income, and enhancing financial supports, from rent supplements to basic income). Importantly the report also recommends providing stable, core funding for housing programs and shelters to reduce burnouts and improve staff retention.

Our strategic plan identifies Strategic Action #23 “*conduct meaningful engagement with people with lived or living experience to assist in building out supports for people impacted by homelessness*”, and specifically:

23.1 Create an advisory group of people with lived or living experience of homelessness to provide input/context on community policy, program development, or evaluation.*

23.2 Develop a strategy for the municipality to prevent, address, and end homelessness in alignment with the Provincial Strategy.

Given the direction of the strategic plan, we commend the WHRM council decision to support funding for the shelter space within Windsor last winter. We are advocating for:

- 1) **continued funding support for shelter spaces for the upcoming winter**, and
- 2) **continued effort and deliberate advocacy is made to the Province which addresses the concerns of our community’s homeless citizens.**

We are advocating for low-income and supported housing units built within our municipality through joint efforts with the province. Despite the challenges faced by levels of government discussing where the responsibility is laid for housing, these issues cannot wait to be addressed as they affect real people.

In solidarity,

Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee

References:

Sweatman, M., Delaney, A., Pattison, O., Grant, S., Casey, R. *Everyone Counts. 2024 Community Support and Service-Based Count on Homelessness in Western Nova Scotia*. Acadia University.