



Committee of the Whole Excerpts
July 8, 2025

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX/BUILDINGS EXCERPT

Following the approval of the 2025/2026 Municipal Budgets, Council expressed a desire to have a more comprehensive discussion on municipal buildings. The intent is to hold an open dialogue where all can share their perspectives and provide possible direction to staff on the future of municipal facilities.

The recommended motion was that Committee of the Whole recommend that ...

COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO SET UP A STRATEGY SESSION TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC (MUNICIPAL COMPLEX AND BUILDINGS) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

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

Submitted by: _____
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: July 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole

Subject: WHRM Municipal Complex Information Report

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

N/A

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

N/A as this is an Information Report

BACKGROUND

Since the 2020 consolidation, Council has engaged in ongoing discussions about the most suitable location for the Regional Municipality's main office. Two primary locations have been under consideration: **100 King Street** and **76 Morison Drive**. Several reports have been reviewed, examining the operational costs, market values, and various logistical and strategic factors associated with both properties.

Key considerations in the decision-making process have included:

- **Short-term vs. long-term priorities:** Balancing the need to reduce costs and centralize staff in the short term, with the broader vision for a sustainable, future-ready municipal complex.
- **Building-specific factors:** Renovation requirements, accessibility, environmental impact, parking availability, and compliance with future pandemic protocols.

- **Strategic options:** Determining whether to invest in one of the existing buildings, explore new construction or lease options, or engage an independent firm to evaluate all current and potential sites to identify the best overall solution.

The discussions underscore the complexity of the decision and the importance of aligning the final choice with the municipality's long-term goals and operational needs.

At the September 13, 2022 meeting Council meeting, CAO Phillips presented a summary of the Municipal Complex Working Group's recommendation, reaffirming key points from past reports and outlining the rationale behind the current direction being proposed.

Highlights from the CAO's Review:

- The current recommendation aligns with the original 2019 Coordinating Committee recommendation, which identified 100 King Street as the preferred location.
- Core evaluation themes included:
 - Conceptual floor plans
 - Parking availability
 - Walkability and accessibility
 - Energy efficiency
 - Layout and future adaptability
 - Marketability of the facility and location

Discussion Points:

- The Working Group leveraged in-house resources due to lack of authority to spend funds, providing preliminary estimates on potential energy efficiency impacts from retrofits. However, a professional review is required to obtain accurate and detailed projections.
- The intent was to advance 100 King Street for further study, based on a scope defined by Council, to evaluate its viability in greater detail.

A clear decision was needed to:

- Establish direction
- Develop a realistic budget
- Move forward with detailed studies on required upgrades, efficiency improvements, and associated costs

Both 100 King and 76 Morison were acknowledged to have pros and cons. However, a significant consideration in favor of 100 King is that it currently houses the Fire Department and relocating that facility would come with substantial additional costs.

Concerns were raised that:

- No firm financial data has been obtained on potential energy savings, asbestos abatement, or comprehensive renovation costs.
- Accurate costing was essential for informed decision-making.
- Parking availability remains unresolved. A draft parking agreement with the nearby Federal Armouries Building off Fort Edward Drive exists but was not finalized pending a Council decision.

Council continued its deliberations regarding the future location and design of the West Hants Regional Municipality's administrative headquarters. Discussions revealed a strong desire to

ensure the decision reflects both current needs and long-term strategic goals. Concern was raised that the broader, long-term needs of the municipality had not been fully considered, particularly in light of future growth and regional accessibility. While there was general consensus that a downtown location was more desirable, questions persisted around whether it was the right decision to invest further into the 100 King Street facility. Some members felt that the cost of retrofitting 100 King might be better spent on a new build or alternate site with greater long-term flexibility.

Much discussion has occurred related to this topic. Previous conversations identified concerns around satisfying short-term needs (cut costs and get everyone under the same roof) vs looking at the greater vision (where the municipal complex needs to be for future years), was it better to invest in an existing building or explore an alternate option (build or lease) or looking for an independent firm to examine what Council currently has for options (100 King Street and 76 Morison Drive) or any other potential premises (the best location) that may suit the needs of the municipality.

West Hants Regional Municipality issued Request for Quotation (RFQ) WHRMADM23-01 on the Nova Scotia Procurement site. The RFQ sought Consulting Services to Evaluate and Recommend the most suitable option for a future Regional Municipal Complex.

Purpose of the RFQ:

To engage a qualified consultant to:

- Assess existing municipal buildings (100 King Street, Windsor and 76 Morison Drive, West Hants),
- Evaluate lease/rent opportunities within the municipality, and
- Explore the feasibility of constructing a new facility to meet both current and long-term municipal needs.

The envisioned complex would house all municipal departments under one roof, including a Council Chamber, conference spaces, public meeting rooms, and administrative offices—targeting a minimum of 16,000 square feet. The facility is intended to reflect efficient, economically sound, and sustainable design principles.

The selected proponent was expected to:

- Review existing materials (e.g., HATCH Engineering reports and staff-collected data).
- Analyze all options (existing buildings, lease/rent alternatives, new build) with full cost breakdowns, renovation/improvement needs, and feasibility.
- Conduct stakeholder engagement, including:
 - One (1) Council workshop
 - Three (3) staff workshops
 - Two (2) public engagement sessions (with online and hard-copy surveys)
- Gather public input on functionality, accessibility, sustainability, location preferences, and general needs.
- Perform site assessments, identifying any required upgrades, system lifespans, and regulatory compliance gaps.
- Evaluate all options through the lens of:
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Energy efficiency

- Universal accessibility
- Future growth potential
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Safety and compliance

The consultant was also expected to provide a final comprehensive report, including:

- Photos and documentation of all components assessed
- Maintenance histories and interviews with staff
- Financial forecasts for both short- and long-term investments
- A clear rationale for each option based on need vs. want

Outcome:

Only one (1) proposal was received in response to the RFQ. The proposal outlined the delivery of:

Three (3) workshops in total

- One (1) with Council
- Three (3) with staff
- Two (2) public engagement sessions

This process was designed to support a well-informed, community-supported decision on the future home of municipal governance and operations in West Hants.

Final Report and Evaluation Criteria

Feedback gathered from all Council, staff, and public engagement sessions will be incorporated into a comprehensive final report. This report will include:

- Identification of required upgrades or repairs needed to bring each option up to current industry standards.
- Estimated lifespan of building components and systems.
- Detailed rationale for each option considered, based on the following evaluation criteria:
 1. Needs vs. Wants – Distinguishing essential requirements from preferred features.
 2. Future Expansion/Growth – Assessing the ability of each option to accommodate future municipal development.
 3. Cost Benefits – Including short- and long-term financial implications of each scenario.
 4. Safety – Ensuring physical security, emergency preparedness, and occupational health standards are met.
 5. Compliance Regulations – Evaluating each option's adherence to building codes, accessibility standards, and environmental guidelines.

The consultant's report was expected to provide Council with the necessary insight to make a strategic, fiscally responsible, and community-supported decision about the future Municipal Complex.

At the May 14, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council engaged in an in-depth discussion regarding the RFQ process and the recommendation to award the consulting contract for evaluating a Regional Municipal Complex.

Key Points from Discussion:

- Differing Views on the Need for a Consultant: Some Councillors expressed confidence that Council itself could make the decision without external input. Others emphasized that

despite previous discussions, key information required for an informed decision had not yet been provided, making an independent assessment necessary.

- **Cost Concerns:** Surprise was expressed over the RFQ's cost, with some members noting that more than \$500,000 had already been spent over the past four years maintaining the existing facilities at 100 King Street and 76 Morison Drive. This raised questions about whether the funds proposed for the RFQ would be better invested directly into one of the existing buildings.
- **Urgency of Decision:** Several Councillors felt that a decision on the Municipal Complex should be made by the current Council, rather than deferred to a future Council.

This discussion resulted in the motion being defeated unanimously and staff being tasked with providing the requested information.

During the May 28, 2024 meeting a report summarizing four years of discussions regarding the Municipal Complex was presented. The report highlighted the accumulative cost of operating a second municipal building and referenced the HATCH report, which supported 100 King Street as the preferred location—though both 100 King and 76 Morison have noted deficiencies. Currently, staff are split between the two buildings.

Concerns were raised about repeated information gaps in reports, specifically regarding the cost to make 100 King a functional, energy-efficient, and accessible space. Issues such as asbestos, elevator access, and insulation were highlighted. There was agreement that any remediation should be done while the building is vacant, and that WHRM would be responsible for remediation even if 100 King were sold or rented.

Some councillors supported moving forward with a decision to consolidate staff, while others felt more information was needed. It was suggested that staff also explore rental and purchase options in the market.

At that meeting it was confirmed that 100 King could accommodate current staffing, although shared spaces may be needed. Renovations would be required at 76 Morison to house all staff there.

Following the discussion the following motions were made:

“MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR S. MCLEAN THAT COUNCIL DIRECTS STAFF TO LOOK AT A ROUGH CLASS D ESTIMATE COST ON A NEW BUILD FOR A MUNICIPAL COMPLEX LOOKING AT USING EXISTING MUNICIPAL LAND OR BUYING LAND, ESTIMATES ON RENTAL AND/OR PURCHASES WITHIN THE MARKET. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Francis and Murley”

“MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR SMITH THAT COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO BRING BACK A REPORT OF COSTING OF ASBESTOS ABATEMENT AT 100 KING STREET, LOOK AT AN ACCESSIBILITY STUDY AND APPROXIMATE COSTS OF RENOVATIONS AT 100 KING MAKING IT A FUNCTIONAL AND SAFE SPACE. MOTION CARRIED”

At the July 9, 2024 meeting, Council reviewed a report providing comparative data and analysis on the following scenarios:

- New construction
- Utilization of existing municipal buildings
- Leased or rental space
- Alternative premises and leasehold options
- Interior and exterior assessments of current facilities

As new information became available, the comparative table would be continuously updated to reflect current figures. Key data included:

- Tax calculations
- Operating costs for each building
- Space requirements and market value
- Availability of both municipal and private lands
- Parking capacity and related site features

Key Discussion Points:

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee conducted a high-level walk-through of 100 King Street, with a more detailed accessibility assessment to follow.
- Council noted satisfaction with the structural assessments completed by HATCH and a second engineering firm, indicating no further third-party structural review was currently needed.
- Overall, it was felt the report aligned with Council's strategic direction and provided the comparative insights necessary for an informed decision.

This review helped to narrow viable options for a centralized Municipal Complex that addresses current needs and plans for future growth.

Since the presentation of the comparative report, discussions around the future home for the West Hants Regional Municipality’s administrative offices have continued, though no formal direction has yet been provided.

It remains the preference of staff and leadership to have all administrative personnel located under one roof. While the current arrangement—splitting operations between 100 King Street and 76 Morison Drive—is functional, it is not ideal. Challenges include:

- Reduced operational efficiency
- Fragmented internal communication
- Duplication of resources and services
- Limitations on collaboration across departments

Property×	Public Opinion ×	Environment ×	Social ×	Economic ×	Councillor Activity ☐
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DISCUSSION

With the swearing-in of a newly elected Council, discussions have resumed with renewed interest and focus. There is a clear desire to move forward toward a decision that will provide a centralized, accessible, and future-ready facility to serve both municipal staff and the public effectively.

NEXT STEPS

To be determined by Council.

Suggested Action: For Council and staff to schedule a specific stand-alone strategic session to review historic information and to determine what this current Council's wishes are or direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To be determined based on Council's discussion and direction

ALTERNATIVES

Maintain Status quo.

ATTACHMENTS

Link to the folder on SharePoint where all the reports and documents can be viewed.

[Municipal Complex Information](#)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

Report Prepared by: _____

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk

Report Approved by:  _____

Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☐	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: West Hants Regional Municipality Council

Submitted by: Mayor Abraham Zebian

Date: July 8, 2025

Subject: Municipal Buildings

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Municipal Government Act

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

TBD after council discussion.

BACKGROUND

Council recently completed its passing of the 2025/2026 Municipal Budgets. During the discussions, Council wished to have a more wholesome discussion on municipal buildings.

Property ☐	Public Opinion ☐	Environment ☐	Social ☐	Economic ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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DISCUSSION

This is meant to be an open discussion on thoughts about municipal buildings from every councillor and possible direction to staff.

NEXT STEPS

TBD

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications with the preparation of this report.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

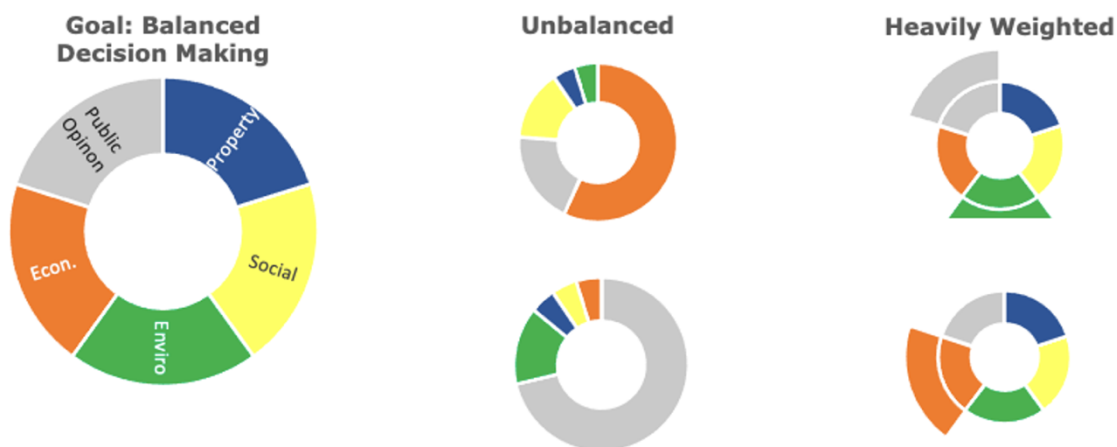
ATTACHMENTS

None.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

Pending CAO review and comments

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 Prepared by: _____

Abraham Zebian, Mayor

Report Reviewed by: _____

(Name and Title)

Report Approved by: _____
(Name and Title)