

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
May 29, 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
 3. Announcements
 4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 23, 2025
 6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Work Plan
 - b) Video Project
 7. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

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