



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☒	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: West Hants Regional Municipality Committee of the Whole

Submitted by: Michel Bourgeois, Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair

Date: October 14, 2025

Subject: Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

The WHRM Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends that Council adopt the Work Plan as presented.

BACKGROUND

Property ☒	Public Opinion ☒	Environment ☐	Social ☒	Economic ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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In March 2025 Council approved the West Hants Anti-Racism, Equity and Accessibility Strategy. The 10-year plan outlines actions and objectives.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee provides advice to Council on identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.

DISCUSSION

An annual Work Plan can provide an effective means of mapping a pathway to meet the objectives of the Municipality's Accessibility Plan and the Accessibility 2030 mandate of the Provincial Government.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee drew upon their lived experience, professional knowledge and passion to create the attached Work Plan.

The goal of this initial Work Plan is to provide Council with a cohesive, measurable indication of the current state, while setting policy, training and awareness initiatives in motion. Each of the recommendations aligns with an identified action in the Anti-Racism, Equity and Accessibility Plan.

An accurate assessment of the accessibility status of the Municipality's assets is a crucial first step. This information can then be used to make informed decisions and better understand the work ahead.

Training and Public Awareness were seen as an essential piece of the foundation required for long-term success.

Ongoing community outreach and support are considered essential to promote and support the objectives. Public recognition of community and business efforts to improve accessibility is an important recommendation of the Work Plan.

Effective measures to embed accessibility in processes and policies are equally important.

The Work Plan as presented provides Council with a clear sense of progress made as well as areas that may require resources. The Work Plan can help provide focus to the work of Council, staff, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to meeting achievable goals.

NEXT STEPS

Move forward with the Accessibility Advisory Committee 2026 Work Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial requests would be submitted to Council for review and approval as part of the annual budget process.

ALTERNATIVES

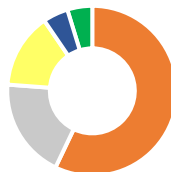
Council could choose not to adopt the Work Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Accessibility Advisory Committee 2026 Work Plan

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

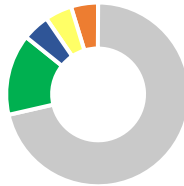
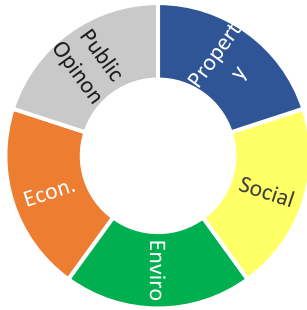
Unbalanced



Heavily Weighted



**Goal: Balanced
Decision Making**



(For use if report is from a Councillor. CAO to provide additional comments on background, department/staff responsible and workload, budget, options, preferred strategy. State “Not Applicable” if report is from staff which already incorporates CAO review.)

Report Prepared by: _____
(Name and Title)

Report Reviewed by: _____
(Name and Title)

Report Approved by: _____
(Name and Title)

West Hants Regional Municipality Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan 2026



Why We Need a Work Plan

West Hants has committed to the Nova Scotia Accessibility 2030 goals. To meet them, Council needs clear steps and good information. This Work Plan gives us a starting point.

Our role as the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to give advice and recommendations to Council. This plan sets out practical actions that Council, staff, and our committee can support and work on together.

The first plan is mostly about **collecting information and setting up processes**. That may not seem exciting, but it's important. If we don't know where we are, we can't decide where we need to go or how to get there.

Our Focus for 2025-2026

1. Accessible Parking

Goal: Make sure municipal parking is safe, consistent, and meets accessibility standards.

Actions:

- Review all existing accessible parking spaces on West Hants streets and at municipal facilities.
- Use the **CSA Standard (B651-23)** and the **Nova Scotia Built Environment Accessibility Standard** to check if spaces meet requirements.
- If spaces don't meet the standard and can't be fixed where they are, look for better locations.
- Create a plan to upgrade spaces that need improvement.
- Update the WHRM Standards Manual so that all future parking spaces are built to the correct standards.

- Ask for public feedback on where accessible curbside parking should be.
- Post a list and map of accessible parking locations on the municipal website so residents can plan trips more easily.

2. Accessibility in Council Reports

Goal: Make accessibility part of every municipal decision.

Actions:

- Add an “Accessibility Considerations” section to all Council and committee report templates.
- Staff will explain what they did to make sure projects or policies are accessible.
- Any consultations with the Accessibility Committee should be noted in the report.
- Departments must review reports to make sure accessibility has been considered from the start.
- Create a simple checklist for report writers to use. This will make sure accessibility is looked at in a consistent way.

3. Facility Review and Inventory

Goal: Know the current state of accessibility in all municipal spaces.

Actions:

- Create one complete inventory (master list) of all municipal buildings, parks, and public spaces.
- Develop a simple template for assessments so data is collected the same way each time.
- Start site visits and accessibility assessments as soon as possible.
- Build a dashboard to track what has been assessed, who is responsible, and progress on upgrades.
- Include municipal workplaces as part of the review.

- Work toward the **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Gold** for new buildings and major renovations, as set out in the Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Strategy.

4. Training for Staff, Council, and Committees

Goal: Build understanding and skills around accessibility, equity, and anti-hate.

Actions:

- Provide ongoing training opportunities for all staff, Council members, and advisory committee members.
- Use local trainers and resources whenever possible.
- Develop training with input from both the Accessibility Committee and the Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee.

5. Outreach, Engagement, and Community Support

Goal: Help businesses, organizations, and events become more accessible.

Actions:

- Include Accessibility Committee and Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee members on any municipal special event task forces or working groups.
- Create a plain language “Accessible Event Guide” for event organizers.
- Review provincial and federal event guides to add to local resources.
- Develop a recognition program for businesses and organizations that improve accessibility (for example: a WHRM-branded window decal and recognition on the municipal website or social media).
- Create a short “Accessibility Tips” handout for businesses and community groups, with practical ideas that make a big difference.

6. Communications and Website

Goal: Make municipal information easier to find, understand, and use.

Actions:

- Review the WHRM website and begin aligning it with **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**.
- Provide training to staff who update the website and create public documents.
- Start updating communications now so the municipality is ready for the provincial information and communication standards expected in 2028-2029.
- Make sure all municipal documents, websites, and public communications are written in plain language.
- Involve the Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee when developing policies related to anti-racism and equity.

Moving Forward

This first Work Plan is just the beginning. It focuses on building a strong base: understanding where we are, setting standards, and embedding accessibility into how the Municipality works.

By supporting these actions, Council will be showing real commitment to equity and accessibility. Staff will have clear direction, and residents will see steady, practical progress toward a more inclusive West Hants.