

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
September 25, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Sweets Corner Community Hall, Sweets Corner, 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 – July 24, 2025
 6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Work Plan – Review of Final Draft and Council Information Report for October Committee of the Whole
 7. New Business
 - a) Accessibility Audit of the Sweets Corner Community Hall (some suggested guidelines attached)
 8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda - AMENDED
July 24, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS
Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting
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1. Call to Order
 2. Attendance and Introductions (Two new members)
 3. Announcements
 4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – May 29, 2025
 6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Work Plan
 - b) Video Project
 7. New Business
 - a) Alternate Meeting Location(s) Discussion
 - b) **New Website Preview**
 8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS



Present:

Michel Bourgeois, Resident Member	Roseanna Boyd, Resident Member
Denise Long, Resident Member	Kathy Johnston, Manager of Recreation & Community Engagement
Councillor Chrystal Remme	Jordan Stephens, Resident Member
Tina McKay, Building & Fire Official	Katie Rose, HR Manager
Melissa MacAskill, Resident Member	Jennifer Davison, Resident Member
Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant	Vanessa Stephens, Resident Member
Brielle Payette, Active Living Coordinator	Mark Phillips, CAO

1. Call to Order – Chair Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
2. Attendance and Introductions (two new members) - Quorum was reached. New members, WHRM Active Living Coordinator Brielle Payette and Resident Member Vanessa Stephens were introduced.
3. Announcements including Land and Cultural Acknowledgements and a Code of Conduct statement. There were no other announcements.
4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
The committee agreed to amend the agenda under New Business to include a municipal website update from Staff Member Johnston. The agenda was accepted as amended.
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – May 29, 2025
The minutes were accepted as presented.
6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Work Plan
Since the last committee meeting, Chair Bourgeois has met with different staff members to determine if this draft work plan is overlapping with any current or planned initiatives. One example would be accessible curbside parking – Public Works is currently working on this, so we can tie their efforts in with our plan.

Chair Bourgeois reviewed the updated work plan document with the committee. The target date for getting a supporting information report to Council would be for the October 2025 Committee of the

Whole meeting. This would keep the work plan in line with budget planning for the 2026-27 fiscal year. Categories reviewed included:

- Inventory and Assessment of Accessible Parking Spaces
- Include Accessibility in Report Template
- Provide Guidance and Recognition for Local Businesses, Community Groups and Events
- Inventory and Assessment of WHRM Facilities
- Create Ongoing Information/Training Opportunities for Staff (HR to take the lead)
- Update All Municipal Documents, Website and Correspondence to Plain Language/ Accessibility Standards

Common threads throughout the draft work plan – staff time and capacity, committee assistance, synergies with current and planned staff initiatives, budget support and adherence to standards.

Discussion points as follows:

- Exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool for navigating, interpreting and communicating. Not in a replacement capacity.
- Engaging someone with Rick Hansen certification or training staff accordingly. There is a need to determine the standard, what we are trying to achieve and how we get there. Rick Hansen training should be added to the work plan.
- Considerations include capacity, fixed costs, labour.
- Include an accessibility dashboard on the municipal website. Recommendations stemming from the work plan would live on the website. This keeps accountability at the forefront and residents stay up to date.
- More community engagement. A crowdsourcing component for identifying/inventorying items like accessible curbside parking spaces. People can reach out to us to advise where spaces are missing needed.
- A pre-tender review is currently in place. Ensure that it is a formalized process with a specific checklist and sign-off. As part of this process, determine what qualifies as a relevant accessibility impact. It was noted that the City of Ottawa has a very comprehensive checklist.
- Regarding inventory and assessment of facilities, we should include which buildings should be assessed first. High traffic areas should be identified and done first.
- The Special Events Committee should include a staff member from this committee.
- Come up with a plain language accessibility starter kit for providing guidance to local businesses.

- Clarification on the parking standard – B61 is the standard used by Rick Hansen. In alignment with the provincial standard as well. This will be put in our manual.
- Sports Complex accessible parking was cited as a place to capture some statistics. Signage has been requested.
- It was suggested that the work plan be written in plain language. Provides an immediate example to Council and staff. Chair Bourgeois will circulate the plan next week for plain language assistance from committee members.
- There was a suggestion to create a video on navigating the website.
- There is a need to create an email address for the Accessibility Committee.

b) Video Project

Staff Member Johnston provided an update. May 2026 will be Accessibility Month in West Hants. This is an opportunity to launch a video series which will create awareness and help launch other initiatives such as the Business Recognition program and program recommendation package.

Work has begun on a script for the initial 40-second video. Following daily throughout the month of May will be a series of shorter videos. These will be based on things that people in the community can take ownership of.

We have begun filming in the community. Local businesses have been wonderful, willing to help and eager to receive feedback. To date, the project team have visited the West Hants Sports Complex, Tim Hortons on Cole Drive and Aunt Lisa's Ice Cream Parlour.

Staff Member Johnston presented some options for a logo to be associated with the business recognition program. Discussion ensued on including the WHRM branding, having different levels of compliance/participation, and the different types of accessibility symbols that might be used. We have time to make decisions and feedback is welcome. It was mentioned that events signage should include a symbol so that people can know the event is safe for them.

There was a question as to whether we were working with the Township, utilizing resources such as their newsletter. That is the vision but we are not that far along yet.

7. New Business

a) Alternate Meeting Location(s) Discussion

Suggested locations included:

- Hants Aquatic Center
- GFL Arena
- Municipally maintained fire halls

- Southwest Hants Fire Hall
- Community Halls (Sweets Corner was mentioned)

The committee will continue to explore holding off-site meetings as a regular occurrence (possibly every third meeting). As part of the meeting the committee could offer an accessibility audit, providing valuable feedback.

It was suggested that the committee should reach out to each Councillor to see where we can meet in their district. The Councillor would be invited to attend. Councillor Remme will include this suggestion in her report to Council. We can start this in her district. This will offer meeting access to more people.

Off-site meetings are not accounted for in the budget. The cost of hall rentals should be included in future budget planning.

b) New Website Preview

Staff Member Johnston presented the committee with a look at the new website design. Feedback was positive, still in the development stage with a targeted launch of September 2025.

8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

September 25 was proposed as the next meeting date. Councillor Remme will book a space in her district (3) and advise Carmen.

Chair Bourgeois called for a motion to adjourn.

Moved by Resident Members Davison and MacAskill that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

X

Committee Chair

X

Municipal Clerk

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.



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Request <input type="checkbox"/>	Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
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To: West Hants Regional Municipality Committee of the Whole

Submitted by: Michel Bourgeois, Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair

Date: Oct 06 ,2025

Subject: Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

N/A

BACKGROUND

Property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Opinion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment <input type="checkbox"/>	Social <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Economic <input type="checkbox"/>	Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
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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

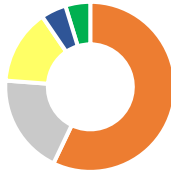
N/A.

ATTACHMENTS

Accessibility Advisory Committee 2026 Work Plan

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

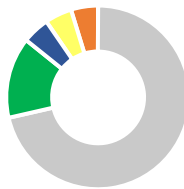
Unbalanced



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)

Some suggested guidelines from Chair Bourgeois:

The intent is to give you an idea of what to look at and look for as you walk through the hall.

A more detailed assessment of a site would require significantly more time than our meetings typically allow.

However, there is value in practicing looking at things through an “accessibility lens” and I hope this helps.

I’ve tried to set the document up to read as if you were approaching the location for an event etc.

Assessment Categories

- Vehicle/Pedestrian Access to site
- Exterior Approaches and Entrances
- Interior Circulation
- Interior Services
- Washrooms
- Wayfinding/Signage
- Emergency Systems

Vehicle and Pedestrian Access to Site

- Safe connection to existing sidewalk (if applicable)
- # of accessible parking spaces
- Location of accessible parking spaces
- Parking surface is firm and stable (asphalt, compacted gravel etc.)
- Curb cuts/pedestrian ramps if curbs or abrupt level changes are present
- Clear signage for parking and building entrance
- Illumination (if site is expected to be used during hours of darkness)
- Is there a designated pick-up/drop off zone?

Exterior Approaches and Entrances

Exterior Pathways to facility

- Clear with no obstructions (include overhead obstacles that are not 'cane detectable)
- Surface is firm, stable and slip resistant
- Pathway is designed to allow for drainage of rain/snow melt etc.
- Pathway is level or low slope (if not accompanied by a ramp)
- Clear signage at decision points (if appropriate for expected site use)
- Well illuminated (if site is expected to be used during hours of darkness)

Exterior Ramps

- Convenient location for typical user access
- Slope
- No obstructions (remember to look overhead and consider items that may not be cane detectable)
- Slip resistant surface
- Clear width
- Appropriate Handrail(s)
- Level Landings with turning space
- High contrast treatment at any direction changes or top of slope
- Edge Protection (along the side of ramp surface)
- Well illuminated (if site is expected to be used during hours of darkness)

Exterior Stairs

- Clear Width
- Stable and Slip Resistant
- Appropriate Handrails
- Level landings
- Designed to drain water/snow melt
- No open risers (the vertical area at the back of a stair tread)
- Tactile Warning Indicators (truncated domes) at top of stairs
- Colour contrasted and slip resistant stair tread nosings
- Check overhead clearance
- Obstructions on stairs? (planters, decorations)
- Well illuminated (if site is expected to be used during hours of darkness)

Building Entrances

- Is accessible entrance present and clearly identified?
- Clear width
- Are door controls (if any) easily identified and in an accessible location?
- If power operated door present, is hold open time adequate?
- Is there a fail-safe back up for power door in the event of power loss?
- If manual door present, is effort required to operate reasonable?
- Is the entrance landing level?
- Is the threshold level?
- Is there clear space on both sides of the door?
- If the door opens into a path of travel, are there cane detectable features to warn users
- If the door primarily solid, is there a window at accessible height to allow users to see the other side?
- If the door is primarily glazed (glass) is there a contrasting marking on the glass to assist those with low vision identify the obstruction?

Interior Circulation

Doors and Doorways

- Open entry to spaces (where applicable)
- Doors/door frames are colour contrasted to adjacent surfaces
- Kick plates on doors
- Windows in solid doors at accessible height
- Clear width
- Level threshold

Path of Travel

- Layout is logical and direct
- Access provided to all spaces expected to be used
- Corridors and hallways have clear unobstructed width (remember overhead and items protruding from walls)
- Floor surface is firm and slip resistant
- Flooring pattern is not “busy” (this can be disorienting)
- Colour contrast between floor and walls
- Handrails/seating if the hallway is long
- Well illuminated with minimal glare or shadows

Interior Stairs and Ramps

- Ramp slope
- Clear Width
- Stable, slip resistant surfaces
- Handrails
- Level Landings
- Edge protection (ramp)
- Colour contrast stair nosing
- No open risers
- No overhead obstructions
- Tactile Warning Indicators (truncated domes) at top of stairs
- Conveniently located
- Well Illuminated

Reception Desks/Service Counters and Self-Service Kiosks

- Desk/counters at accessible or variable heights
- Clear space for all users
- Adequate knee space for a forward approach at transaction points
- Clear signage visible from entrance
- Counter or desk is colour contrasted with surroundings
- Assistive listening devices
- Accessible self-service kiosks with audio instructions
- Well-illuminated

Interior Services Lobby/Reception

- Logical arrangement of circulation routes and facilities
- Key facilities easily located
- Washroom facilities adjacent to lobby and reception areas
- Floor finish is slip resistant with minimal glare. Avoid busy flooring patterns
- Seating where one may be expected to wait
- Well-illuminated

Meeting Rooms, Waiting Areas and Lounges

- Variety of seating types
- Seating arranged to provide clear space
- Upholstery is colour contrasted, non-slip, matte finish without bold patterns
- Accessible height tables with rounded corners
- Assistive listening technologies
- Floor finish is slip resistant without busy patterns or excessive glare
- Well-illuminated

Acoustic Considerations

- Sound damping
- Adjustable volume on speakers/paging system (where applicable)

Washrooms

Washrooms are a critical part of any building and form a large part of any audit. The measuring of washroom dimensions may be beyond the scope of this particular walkthrough.

The high-level things to look for are:

- Adequate transfer space adjacent toilet
- Grab rails appropriately placed and securely installed
- Knee clearance under sink with piping offset and enclosed to prevent burns from hot water pipes
- Fixtures such as hand towel/hand dryers, soap dispensers, garbage receptacle mounted at appropriate height with clear approach space

Building Systems

- Lighting does not create glare on flooring, walls and other surfaces
- Building controls are at an accessible height and adequate clear approach space is maintained
- Drinking fountains are accessible

Room identification/Directory Boards

- Logical numbering of rooms/spaces
- Signage includes Braille and raised text/characters
- Signage at accessible height and approach
- Blade signage
- Comprehensive information

WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE General Signage

- Comprehensive wayfinding signage for expected facility use
- Blade Signage complements overhead signage
- Lettering, numerals and symbols are clearly visible
- Well illuminated, glare-free signage
- High-contrast characters on single colour background
- Efficient and consistent wording
- Where possible use international symbols/pictograms

EMERGENCY SYSTEMS

- Designated area of refuge, with adequate clear space, in a multi-level building
- Clear signage for emergency exit and refuge area
- Emergency exit and refuge area door are colour contrasted with surroundings
- Evacuation chair or similar equipment readily available
- All ground-level emergency exits are accessible
- Visual fire alarms throughout facility and particularly where people may be alone
- Fire alarm pulls at accessible height with unobstructed approach
- Fire-fighting and first aid equipment is accessible

