

# EQUITY, ANTI-RACISM, AND ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY PLAN

Amended April 30, 2025 to reflect our commitment to an improved Strategic Action #4; Making municipal buildings and public spaces more accessible to people of all ages and abilities.  
Page 68, Section 4.2



**West Hants**  
something inspiring awaits

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# PJILA'SI | WELCOME | BIENVENUE

**Welcome to the West Hants Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Strategy Plan. This plan, along with other initiatives in Nova Scotia and in Canada, aims to make West Hants safe, inclusive, and equitable for all.**

For the next 10 years, this plan will guide the elected West Hants Regional Municipality Council, municipal employees, local people, businesses, and community groups to work together to:

- Increase equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice.
- Dismantle hate, including racism and discrimination.
- Foster belonging for everyone.
- Move toward Truth and Reconciliation.

As you read this document, please keep in mind:

- More than 200 people from West Hants shared their ideas to create this plan.
- This plan builds on our past efforts, like the Accessibility Plan 2022 and the Windsor/West Hants Together Community Engagement Report 2021.
- This plan aligns with commitments from the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act and Nova Scotia's Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy.
- This plan will change as we learn together.



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We recognize that West Hants is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw nation who have existed here since time immemorial, meaning for over tens of thousands of years.

This land is governed by the Peace and Friendship Treaties, which were signed between the Mi'kmaq and the British Crown throughout the 1700s. These treaties are celebrated every year on October 1st and speak about the relationship between newcomers and the Original People. These treaties are grounded in mutual respect and co-governance. Like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, they place obligations on relationships between all of us living in and making home within Mi'kma'ki.

**We are all Treaty people.**



# WORDS OF APPRECIATION

We also acknowledge that African Nova Scotians histories, legacies and contributions have enriched this part of Mi'kma'ki, now known as Nova Scotia, for over 400 years; and the Acadian community's deep roots in this land, their resilience, and their enduring contributions to our heritage.



## THANK YOU

Thank you to the working group members for making themselves available to contribute ideas, ground this work, and talk about its challenges and opportunities.

Also, thank you to all community members who offered to share their thoughts online and in person. We're grateful for the time and energy you all put into sharing your ideas, experiences, and insights. We hope this report reflects the meaningful conversations we've had, honors your valuable input, and contributes to the well-being of all community members.

Thanks again for your hard work in building a more inclusive and supportive West Hants.



# DISCLAIMER

**Caution:** This document covers topics that may be upsetting for some readers. It discusses the mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples and marginalized communities. Please take care of yourself while reading this material. If you would like to access mental health resources, here is a list of supports available for all Nova Scotians who are in crisis and/or need immediate assistance:

## **ACCESS WELLNESS NOVA SCOTIA**

Free single-session supportive counselling service for individuals, couples, and families. Open to all Nova Scotians over the age of 18. Sessions can be over the phone, online or in person.

**1.833.691.2282**

**[accesswellness.lifeworks.com/nova-scotia-en](https://accesswellness.lifeworks.com/nova-scotia-en)**

## **PROVINCIAL MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CRISIS LINE**

**888.429.8167**

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS INTAKE**

**855.922.1122**

## **MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE**

**866.531.2600**

## **CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

Advocacy, programs and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and support recovery and resilience.

**877.466.6606**

**[novascotia.cmha.ca](https://novascotia.cmha.ca)**

## **E-MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS & RESOURCES**

**[mha.nshealth.ca/en/tools](https://mha.nshealth.ca/en/tools)**

## **KIDS HELP PHONE**

**800.668.6868 or text 686868**

# A NOTE ABOUT OUR WORDS

**The words we choose can lift people up or hold them back.** There is no universal definition for many of the words used in this plan. So, Community members who helped create this plan suggested the words below. They believe these words are respectful and fitting today. However, language changes over time. Some terms that were once common are now unacceptable. Just like this plan, our language in West Hants will continue to change and evolve as we learn more from each other.



Not everyone in West Hants may agree with these words. If you have any concerns with the language used in this document, please email [equity@westhants.ca](mailto:equity@westhants.ca)

## Accessibility

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When we say "accessibility," we mean making sure everyone has equal access and benefit from physical spaces, transportation, information, communication, and services.

Accessibility means having the necessary conditions to reduce or eliminate these barriers that impact the full participation of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.



In West Hants, people with disabilities face many ongoing challenges and barriers.

These include such things as stairs, lack of ramps, and lack of information in accessible formats such as Braille, plain language, and sign language.

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## Decolonization

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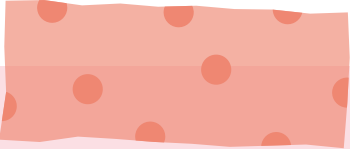
Decolonization is about dismantling colonial structures and ideologies. The concept is sometimes used aspirationally, but the road to true decolonization requires a deep commitment from everyone, which may not be within the comfort zone of all people.

## Discrimination

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According to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, discrimination refers to actions, behaviours, decisions, or omissions that unfairly treat an individual or a group based on personal characteristics, including:

- Race
- National or ethnic origin
- Color
- Religion
- Age
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- Marital status
- Family status
- Disability
- Genetic characteristics
- Housing situation (e.g., being unhoused)
- A conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended



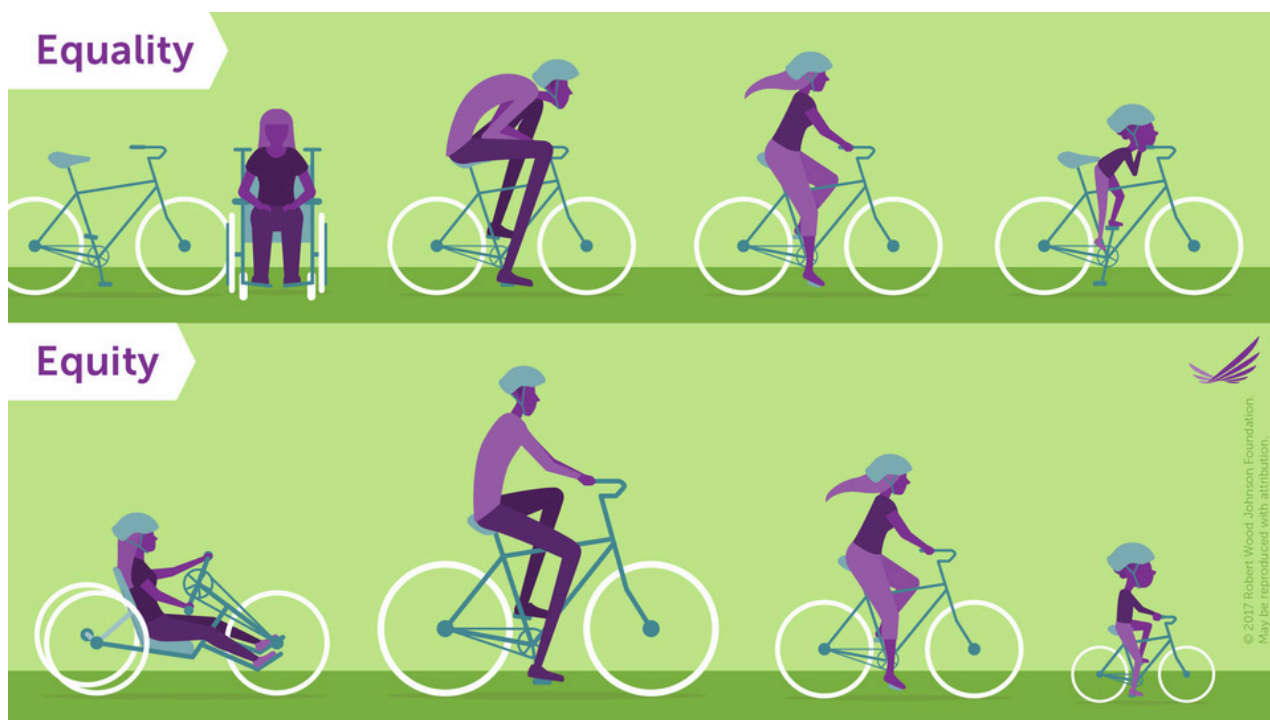
### Did you know?

- **All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.**
- Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.
- Even rules, practices and procedures that seem harmless can cause discrimination if they have the effect of putting certain groups of people at a disadvantage.
- Discrimination can be out in the open (direct). This discrimination is often based on negative attitudes and biases.
- Discrimination can also be hidden (indirect). This is the most common kind of discrimination. Indirect discrimination happens when a rule or policy that does not cause a problem for most people has an unfair effect on a person or group that is related to their personal traits.

## Equity

Equity means treating people fairly by recognizing that everyone has different needs and experiences. It's about understanding these differences and making sure everyone gets the support they need to have the same opportunities in life.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation says *"Thinking the same approach will work universally is like expecting everyone to be able to ride the same bike"* and has created the visual below to explain what equity means.

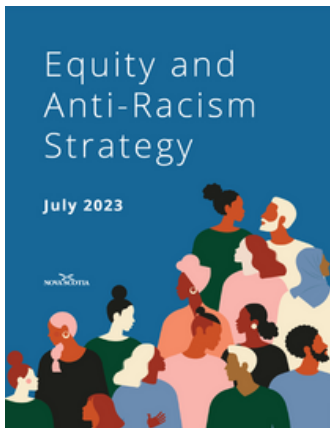


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## Equity-Denied Communities

When this document says equity-denied communities, it is referring to the group of communities that have been historically denied equity, underrepresented and underserved in West Hants. For instance:

- African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent
- 2SLGBTQIA+ Community
- Gender Communities
- Newcomers, Immigrants and Refugees
- Faith-Based Communities
- Persons with Disabilities



According to the Nova Scotia Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy, an **underrepresented community refers to a group of people who are not adequately represented or have limited presence or visibility** in certain domains or contexts, such as social, political, economic, educational, or cultural spheres. These communities typically experience marginalization, discrimination, or exclusion due to various factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics.

The term **“underserved”** implies that the community is not receiving/has not received an adequate level of support or attention from institutions, organizations, or government agencies. This lack of access can manifest in various areas, including health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, and social services.

### Did you know?

**Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) are section 35 rights holders who hold constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.**

Their rights include:

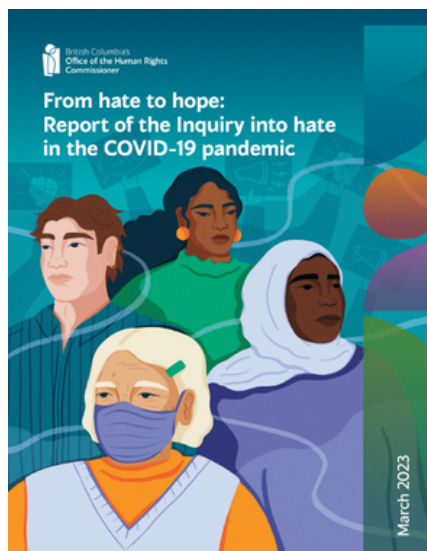
- Inherent rights (e.g., self-governance, cultural practices)
- Land rights (e.g., title to traditional territories)
- Treaty rights (e.g., hunting, fishing, and harvesting rights outlined in treaties)

This means they are not equity seeking or equity deserving groups. However, they experience similar challenges to those experienced by equity-denied communities.

## Hate

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Hate is intense dislike towards individuals and groups, which leads to extreme aversion or hostility. In this plan, the word hate is used as an umbrella term that leads to discrimination, inequity, and lack of accessibility.



According to From Hate to Hope Report:

- Hate is based in issues of power and control.
- Hate comes from the idea that certain people can or should have power and control over others.
- These ideas come from our history where certain people took power over others. These ideas are built into systems that help certain people keep their power.
- Hate starts from negative assumptions, images and beliefs about a certain group. These negative assumptions are called stereotypes.

## Homophobia

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The word "phobia" means fear, but homophobia isn't just about being scared. Homophobia is discrimination against people who are attracted to the same sex.

It can appear in various ways, such as:

- Negative attitudes or stereotypes about lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people
- Discrimination in workplaces, schools, or public spaces
- Verbal or physical harassment
- Laws and policies that restrict LGB rights

Some people believe that being gay challenges old ideas about gender and who should love whom. This makes them uncomfortable, but instead of just feeling afraid, they act in ways that hurt or exclude gay people.

## Privilege

Privilege means the experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and opportunities that people in a dominant group have.

This visual tool created by the Government of Canada can help everyone identify how power and privilege relate to their personal circumstance. The visual covers thirteen categories of social identity, including Citizenship, Wealth, Gender, and Language. Each category has at least three levels of privilege.



## Transphobia

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Transphobia is the fear, hatred, disbelief, or mistrust of transgender (trans) people. It can lead to discrimination, exclusion, or violence against trans individuals.

- Transphobia can appear in various ways, such as:
- Denying that trans people exist or deserve rights
- Preventing trans people from living a full-filled life
- Portraying trans people as a “threat”
- Assuming that one or two trans people can represent the entire community
- Using biological essentialism to try and delegitimize trans people
- Using incorrect pronouns and names
- Blocking access to gender-affirming healthcare
- Enforcing restrictive gender norms
- Physical assault or abuse
- Harassment (e.g., posting photos of trans people without their consent, spreading rumours or sending hateful messages)

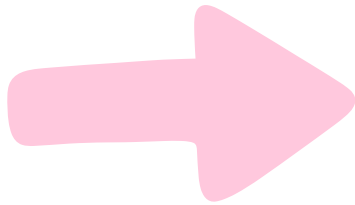


## Racism

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When we refer to racism, we mean the belief that individuals from a particular race are inherently superior to those of other races. Racism can take many forms and is a type of discrimination, including, for example:

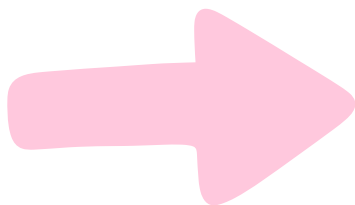
- **Anti-Indigenous Racism:** The ongoing experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, expressed through racial discrimination, oppression, and injustices.
- **Anti-Black Racism:** Discrimination against Black individuals, deeply rooted in the historical contexts of enslavement and colonization.
- **Anti-Asian Racism:** Discrimination against individuals of Asian descent, marked by negative stereotypes, racial bias, hate, and racial injustices.



### Systemic Racism

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Systemic Racism is a system that gives one racial group power. This allows them to dominate others in social, political, and economic areas across generations. This often shows in policies, programs, and practices that favour white people.



### Environmental Racism

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Environmental racism is a form of systemic racism. It means that polluting industries and environmentally hazardous activities are primarily located near low-income or minority communities. In Canada, In Nova Scotia, and specifically in West Hants, Mi'kmaq and Black communities are the most affected by environmental racism (Environmental racism in Canada, 2022).



# BACKGROUND

# DIVERSITY IN WEST HANTS

**Our community is becoming more diverse.** West Hants Regional Municipality is a vibrant and growing region with **19,000 diverse residents** spread across **1,253 square kilometres**. The municipality includes the former towns of Windsor and Hantsport, along with the former District of West Hants, blending thriving rural spaces with growing communities.

The municipality's **population grew by 2.6% between 2016 and 2021** - with the Finance and Treasury Board projecting an increase of 4% between 2022 and 2027 and 7% between 2027 and 2032.



As our population grows more diverse and the world continues to change, it's more important than ever to understand where our community stands today and meet people's needs for inclusion, respect, safety, and justice.



Approximately **1 out of every 3** Nova Scotians aged 15 and older report having one or more disabilities.

**4%**

of the West Hants population in 2021 identified as a visible minority.

**645**

West Hants residents identified as new immigrants and 1,245 individuals who were born in Canada had at least one parent born outside Canada.

**585**

West Hants residents identified as Indigenous.

“ —

**Today teaches  
tomorrow a lesson**

**– African Proverb**

# HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

**Discrimination and lack of accessibility have deep historical roots in West Hants and continue to impact the experiences of equity-denied communities.**

## Mi'kmaw Nation

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The Mi'kmaw nation are the only Original Peoples of these lands (Nova Scotia). They have experienced historical and contemporary injustices and systemic barriers.

**Responsibilities and relationships to the Mi'kmaq are grounded in the treaty relationship through the Peace and Friendship Treaties.** Indigenous peoples are not equity-seeking groups. They have a distinct relationship and position in Canada as the Original Peoples to this land. These relationships extend outside of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, and instead are about **reconciliation** (learn more about what we heard regarding reconciliation on page [45](#)). The roadmap to reconciliation must be grounded in nation-to-municipal relations, and understanding that Indigenous nations, like the Mi'kmaq, are self-determining.

Glooscap First Nation is a Mi'kmaw community within West Hants that contributes culturally, socially and economically to the success and vibrancy of the Municipality. Despite this, we have yet to achieve a fulsome nation-to-municipal relationship and Mi'kmaw community members still do not feel meaningful inclusion and a move towards reconciliation. The legacy of colonization continues to erode trust and perpetuate systemic disadvantages.

The framework for the path forward is rooted in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. As such, several actions outlined in this plan directly reflect the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Calls to Justice by the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, and include a commitment for the municipality to explore how to implement the principles within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and policies, protocols and resolutions developed by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs.

## African Nova Scotians

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African Nova Scotians are a distinct group of people with Black ancestors. Their families come from free and enslaved Black Planters, Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, Maroons, and other Black people who first lived in 52 Black communities in Nova Scotia. They were “settled” in Nova Scotia through enslavement or through fleeing enslavement elsewhere.

Today, about 20,000 African Nova Scotians live in Nova Scotia, and they continue to experience discrimination.



An old black-and-white photo of a train track in Three Mile Plains

Source: West Hants Historical Society Museum

**There is evidence of African Nova Scotian settlements in West Hants dating back to the 1700s. However, African Nova Scotian communities, particularly those connected to Three Mile Plains, continue to experience systemic racism and discrimination.**

Three Mile Plains is recognized as one of the province's historical African Nova Scotian communities. The area was originally inhabited by African-American settlers who referred to it as Windsor Plains. Over time, it became home to a significant Black population, with many residents tracing their ancestry back to Black Loyalists and refugees from the War of 1812.

Several actions in this plan respond to the need to work in concert with African Nova Scotian and Black communities to acknowledge and eradicate racial discrimination in alignment with

- [The Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination](#)
- [The United Nations' International Decade for Peoples of African Descent \(2015 - 2024\)](#); and
- [The Permanent Forum of Peoples of African Descent](#).

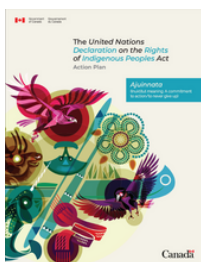
# A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Canada, Nova Scotia, and West Hants are becoming more multicultural and diverse, but some of our thoughts and actions are founded on colonial mindsets, practices, and policies. Therefore, addressing racism, discrimination, and accessibility barriers requires a shared responsibility across all levels of government, community members, and society.

## At the Federal Level: Canada

In addition to supporting the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Canada has ratified several UN human rights treaties that inform this plan, such as:

- [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#)
- [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)



Canada is working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to implement the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). This is a very important step to building better nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationships based on the affirmation of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.



In 2018, the Government of Canada formally endorsed the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent and committed to taking action on the issues that affect people of African descent in Canada, including systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Black people in the criminal justice system.

In summary, Canada has set a foundation to address reconciliation and equity through comprehensive policy and legislative frameworks and initiatives. For example:

- The [Accessible Canada Act \(2019\)](#) sets a bold goal of a **barrier-free Canada by 2040**, focusing on removing physical, systemic, and communication barriers for persons with disabilities.
- [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2028](#) builds on the approach used in the 2019-2022 strategy to **eradicate systemic racism and discrimination in Canada** through a community-driven framework.

## At the Provincial Level: Nova Scotia

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Nova Scotia passed its Accessibility Act and developed the 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan roadmap, demonstrating its commitment to making Nova Scotia a more equitable and barrier-free province by 2030.

Similarly, the government of Nova Scotia passed the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, established the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives(OEA) and developed the Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy to address systemic hate, inequity, and racism.

As part of this work, the Province asked municipalities and villages in 2024 to create their own plans to address systemic hate, inequity, and racism while aligning with the requirements under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

### Did you know?

- The Mi'kmaw Language Act recognizes Mi'kmaw as Nova Scotia's first language.
- It took effect on October 1, 2022 Treaty Day.
- The Act support efforts to protect and revitalize the Mi'kmaw Language.



## At the Municipal Level: West Hants

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The West Hants Regional Municipality is committed to creating a community where hate, racism, and discrimination have no place. We plan to work towards this goal through practical actions like policies, land use, hiring practices, services, and programs.

Despite some progress, systemic barriers and inequities persist, preventing some West Hants residents from fully participating in and benefiting from community life. Racism, discrimination, and lack of accessibility are still prevalent and widespread.

Over the last few years, the municipality has started reshaping how things are done through efforts such as the establishment of the Accessibility Committee and the Diversity and Inclusive Communities Committee and the development of the 2022 Accessibility Plan.

**The West Hants Accessibility Committee** is comprised of seven (7) voting members, with one-half of the members being persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities. The Committee provides advice to Council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives, and facilities; and therefore, it plays a pivotal role in helping WHRM become a barrier free community, and ensure we are meeting the requirements outlined in the Accessibility Act, as well as the Accessibility Plan.

To align with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017), the committee published the 2022 Accessibility Plan summarizing the Municipality's commitment to addressing accessibility barriers within the six focus areas: Awareness, Programs & Services, Information & Communication, Transportation, Employment, and the Built Environment.

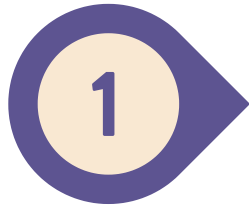
**The West Hants Diversity and Inclusion Community Advisory Committee** is comprised of eight (8) voting members and ten (10) non-voting members from various diverse groups including but not limited to those from African descent, Acadian, Glooscap First Nation, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, Senior, Youth, and Newcomer communities.

The Committee serves in an advisory capacity and makes recommendations to Council on issues concerning social marginalization, equity, racism, and discrimination within the Municipality and its workplaces. The Committee focused on five key areas: Symbolic Actions, Education & Attitudes, Internal Education & Think Tank Activities, Policy and Practice, and Structural Equity.

## Your Role in Fighting Racism and Building Fairness

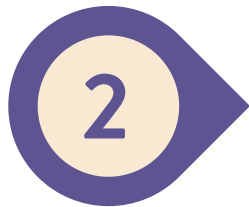
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Everyone has a part to play in making our community fair and equal for everyone, no matter their race or background. Here's how you can help:



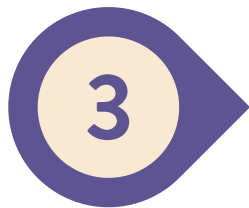
### Examine your own beliefs and assumptions, and confront your biases

- Start by acknowledging your privilege and power through ongoing and honest self-reflection
- Think about your own beliefs. We all have biases, even if we don't realize it. Try to understand where your ideas come from and if they might be unfair.



### Learn and unlearn

- Take time to learn about racism. This means understanding how it works, how it has hurt people in the past, and how it still affects people today.
- Read books, watch documentaries, and listen to podcasts about different cultures and experiences.



### Take action

- **If you hear someone making a racist joke or comment, say something.** It can be as simple as saying, "That's not cool," or "That's racist, and it's not okay."
- Support businesses and groups that treat everyone fairly.
- Listen to the experiences of people who have faced hate. Their stories are important, and they can help you understand what it's like to experience discrimination.
- Spread the message that racism can be eradicated from our world.
- Show your support and share the facts using your social media channels and wherever you can.
- Engage in discussions about racism and discrimination with children, tailoring the conversation to be age-appropriate.
- Volunteer your time and share your skills directly in support of equity-denied communities and initiatives working to end racism.
- Participate in community events that promote diversity and inclusion.

**Fighting hate is a lifelong process. Keep learning, listening, and taking action.**

“ —

I would prefer to see things where events, representation, and art is not reflective of my European descent. I already feel welcomed, you need to work on making others feel welcome.

– Survey respondent



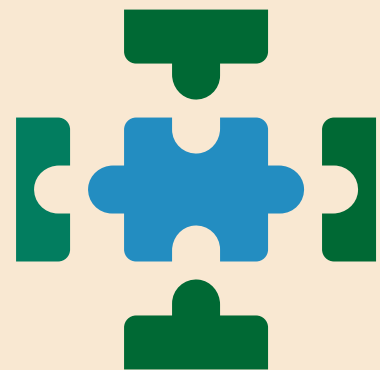


# METHODOLOGY

# HOW THIS DOCUMENT WAS CREATED

## 1. BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

A working group of community leaders was established to help guide the approach and development of the Strategy. Members included Anne Bishop, Jordan Stephens, Michel Bourgeois, Lisa Bland, and Roseanna Boyd. They gave input and advice while representing the interests/concerns of the West Hants communities.



## 2. EXPLORE HOW WEST HANTS RESIDENTS WANT TO ENGAGE

Eleven (**11**) community leaders provided input on how best to engage with West Hants residents while building upon previous work (for more information, see the section: Building on the work we're doing).

## 3. INVITE WEST HANTS RESIDENTS TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS

Residents of West Hants were invited to join community discussions or complete an online survey. To gather more feedback, several strategies were used, including social media updates, spreading the word with help from local organizations, displaying posters in public spaces, and handing out flyers at holiday events, community breakfasts, and free activities at the West Hants Sport Complex.



## 4. DEEPLY LISTEN

Between December 1 and January 16, 2025, **over 200 people** shared their thoughts and ideas to help figure out what actions the town, local community members, businesses, and other groups could take. Some people filled out an online survey, while others took part in meetings at these places:

- Isabel & Roy Jodrey Memorial Library in Hantsport
- Avondale Hall in Avondale
- Three Miles Plains Hall in Three Miles Plains
- Peer Outreach Support Services & Education (POSSE)

The project was also talked about with the Chief and Council of Glooscap First Nation during a Band Council meeting in November 2024.



## 5. SUMMARIZE

Municipal staff and hired consultants worked together to gather and organize all the ideas shared by community members. They found common themes, looked at what other municipalities and internal departments are doing, and reviewed past reports to create a summary of what was heard and a list of actions.

## 6. CHECK THE DRAFT AND MAKE CHANGES

Around 20 community members got together on January 16th, 2025 at Three Miles Plains Hall to give feedback on the initial ideas. Once a draft version of the plan was created, the Working Group, the Accessibility and Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committees, The Glooscap Council, and municipal staff provided feedback to make this plan better.



# WHAT WE WISH COULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT

**While this strategy is an important step forward, we recognize that not all voices were heard and reconciliation means taking the time to hear those voices. Ongoing efforts are needed to continue collaborating.**

The plan to complete this strategic initiative was set for five months; and therefore:

- **Comprehensive engagement with Mi'kmaq voices, especially Glooscap First Nation, was not possible.** An initial presentation was made to Chief and Council on November 19th, 2025. However, due to time restraints and the holiday seasons a specific engagement session did not occur with Mi'kmaq individuals. To prevent this from happening for future initiatives, we have included an action about creating an authentic relationship with Glooscap and ongoing engagement efforts.
- **It took time to find, coordinate, and book community spaces that were accessible and suitable for the engagement.** Because of this, people did not always get much notice about in-person sessions. For example, the specifics of the session in Hantsport were announced 48 hours in advance. This made it hard for people to participate, in particular with Mi'kmaq, as engagement usually requires more notice.
- **We couldn't always move at the pace that meaningful relationship-building requires.** The Mi'kmaq and equity-denied communities need time and demonstrated commitment from the municipality to build trust and feel comfortable sharing their experiences and ideas. People need space for healing, sharing, and being heard before they can jump into co-designing solutions.
- **We didn't hear from as many people as ideal.** Much of the engagement had to happen in December, a time when many people are busy with holidays or taking a break. To mitigate this, we gave people the option to participate in person, online, or via phone and attended several holiday events. In the future, engagement should not be conducted during the holiday season.

**In addition, using a survey helped us hear from many people, but it also had some limitations:**

- The survey let people self-identify, which is a good practice because it respects how people see themselves. But it also comes with challenges. For example, in Canada, there have been concerns about people falsely claiming Indigenous identity, which can take opportunities and resources away from Indigenous communities.
- There were corrections to the survey after it was first distributed. While a correction was made later on, this impacted data collection. For example, on questions homogenized “Mi’kmaq” and “Indigenous”, when there are not the same thing. The Mi’kmaq are an Indigenous nation, but not all Indigenous persons are Mi’kmaq.
- More in-depth engagement, such as deep conversations or observations over time, would have given us a deeper understanding of people’s experiences.

Despite these challenges, we believe that engagement is an ongoing process rooted in relationship building. This strategy is a strong starting point, and sets the stage for ongoing conversation and collaboration. The lessons we learned have shaped this first version of the strategy, and they will continue to guide how we improve and adapt moving forward.

**The municipality is committed to continuing this work, deepening relationships with all West Hants Residents, and making sure future engagement is more inclusive and responsive to their needs.**



# STRATEGY PLAN



# ABOUT THIS SECTION


This section summarizes what we heard from the community through previous and current engagements, highlighting the priorities and concerns people shared. It also explains the actions and solutions that community members suggested to address these important challenges, as well as what research and best practices show about what works well in similar situations.

This report focuses on addressing systemic racism, discrimination, and accessibility barriers within West Hants. While crucial, this focus means that the report does not include specific recommendations to tackle wider systemic issues (some of them included in the Calls to Action), such as:

- Wealth disparity
- The ongoing housing crisis
- Cultural barriers of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA
- Barriers to equitable business ownership
- Affordable and safe transportation services for Indigenous individuals off-reserve
- Culturally appropriate access to childcare,
- Programming that addresses family violence

We recognize that these issues create significant inequities within the community and deeply intersect with the experiences of marginalized groups. Addressing these complex challenges will be essential for achieving true equity and may necessitate distinct strategies and collaborative efforts to eliminate barriers.

To be effective in this, this requires the municipality to work collaboratively with groups, such as Indigenous communities, including Glooscap, African Nova Scotians, 2SLGBTQIA+ members, etc.



Lift the responsibility for supporting vulnerable community members from volunteers. Invest in affordable housing, support financially existing outreach efforts, listen to Indigenous neighbours and protect fish passage in the causeway, Demonstrate leadership in improving mental health and addiction support services. Celebrate and promote holidays and traditions of minority cultures through municipal newsletters. Offer more literacy support opportunities for free in community locations.

-Survey respondent

**The stories shared are just a small glimpse into the experiences of people in our community. The Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities each have their own unique history of discrimination and exclusion.** Understanding these histories is essential to building a truly inclusive and fair West Hants.

Community members showed great courage in sharing their experiences. Their stories highlight the need for safe spaces where people can openly talk about inequities and power imbalances. To create real change, we must center the voices of those most impacted. This will help shape policies, programs, and decisions that lead to fairness for all and support healing between communities.

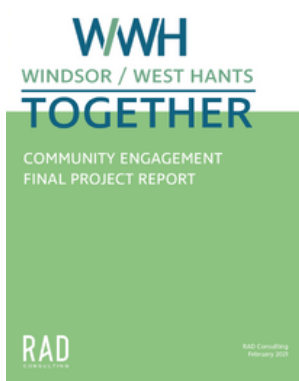
These stories also made it clear that systemic racism, inequity, and discrimination are still a daily reality for many people in West Hants, especially for equity-deserving communities and rights holders. People stressed that dismantling systemic barriers is not just about increasing diversity—it requires actively challenging and changing the power structures that allow inequity to continue.

# BUILDING ON THE WORK WE'RE DOING

## RAD Report

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**During the consolidation of municipalities of Windsor and West Hants, in December 2019, RAD Consulting conducted a comprehensive community engagement about the future of merging the two communities and needs of its' citizens.**



Insights were gathered regarding the current challenges from municipal staff, politicians and community leaders in the form of workshops, one-on-one meetings, and surveys. One-on-one interviews were conducted with community leaders representing equity deserving communities and rights holders, including those representing seniors, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ members, African Nova Scotians, Glooscap First Nations, and others.

The objective of the report was to share challenges and recommendations for the consolidated municipality. Given the depth of information collected and the sharing of real and relevant experiences from community groups, the findings from this report and the recommendations were used to help understand the key challenges experienced by residents of West Hants from these key groups. Quotes and information from this report have been integrated into this report.

## The West Hants Accessibility Plan 2022

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**This plan was launched in 2022 and outlines how the municipality will achieve this goal through the removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility.**



The West Hants Accessibility Advisory Committee has been supporting the municipality in implementing the recommendations. As part of this strategy, the plan was used to identify barriers experienced by people with disabilities. Recommendations that continue to be relevant based on the engagement findings have been incorporated into this plan.

“ —

**The elephant in the living room is racism and discrimination. We need to stop ignoring it and start talking about it.**

**– RAD Report**

# HATE AND RACISM

**Racism, discrimination, and hate exist in West Hants and affect people from many backgrounds.** The 2022 RAD Consulting report, along with recent surveys and community discussions, showed that many people still experience racism and hate. This highlights the urgent need for systemic change.

People's stories also showed that discrimination is complex. A person's race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, and income level can combine to make their experiences of marginalization even worse.

The 2022 RAD Consulting report highlighted **environmental racism as a major issue for Black and African Nova Scotian residents, especially in places like Three Mile Plains.** People shared how systemic inequities lead to environmental harm in communities of color. At the time of the report, these issues were still affecting people's daily lives.

“  
Environmental racism is a real problem. It's when polluting industries are located in communities of color. This can lead to health problems for people who live in those communities. We need to do more to protect our environment and to make sure that everyone has access to clean air and water.

-RAD Report  
”

**Similarly, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth consistently expressed feelings of unsafety and exclusion within public and community spaces.** The fear of being targeted for their sexual orientation or gender identity was palpable, with many calling for dedicated safe spaces where they could be their authentic selves.

“  
We need to do more to support LGBTQ people in our community. They often face discrimination and harassment. They may not feel safe or welcome in our community. We need to do more to create a safe and inclusive community for everyone.

-RAD Report  
”

**Beyond these specific examples, many people shared that they have experienced or seen acts of hate, racism, and discrimination against people from diverse backgrounds in public spaces.** These incidents happened in parks, community centers, and local businesses, showing how widespread the problem is. Some community members doubted that racism exists in West Hants, but the many personal stories made it clear that real change is needed. A shared understanding and commitment to action are essential.

“  
At WHMS I have seen racism discrimination transphobia homophobia and more almost everyday without fail.  
-Survey respondent  
”

“  
I was so disappointed to go into a local business and had the person behind the counter talk about gender diverse people in a disparaging way and use an ethnic slur for people of Arab descent  
-Survey respondent  
”

”

”

# WELCOMING AND SAFE SPACES

**During our community consultations, people told us they want inclusive spaces that meet the diverse needs of everyone.**

During our engagements, participants expressed the urgent need for a municipality where everyone feels valued, accepted, and safe. Also, they shared feeling unwelcome in spaces due to the color of their skin, their sexual orientation, or their socio-economic status.

Some people recognized past efforts to make spaces more inclusive, but they said more needs to be done. They want change that focuses on the needs of marginalized communities.

Residents said true inclusion means removing discrimination, challenging biases, and listening to those most affected. People are calling for long-term action from everyone in West Hants, especially municipal leaders, to create fair and safe spaces where all residents can thrive.

This includes recognizing and addressing the ongoing effects of colonization, anti-Black racism, accessibility barriers, and other forms of discrimination in our community.



**The RAD report shared firsthand stories of people feeling isolated, excluded, and like they don't belong.** This was especially true for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, Indigenous community members, and African Nova Scotians.

For example, RAD engagement participants shared:

- "People are living in silos"
- "Some mental health issues (are) stemming from isolation and frustration over age- based limitations"
- "Funding (should) be made available for mental health and LGBTQ services, organized group sessions for the purposes of education, as well as the establishment of a safe space or spaces other than her home."

# WELCOMING AND SAFE SPACES

Words from engagement participants

“  
We need spaces that are open and welcoming of all people without fear and without prejudice  
”

“  
The best method of promoting belonging is to provide spaces for all people to congregate, walk, bring kids and grandkids etc.  
”

“  
Just walk the talk in everyday events, meetings and interactions. Not a 'one day' thing but small ongoing integral ways.  
”

“  
There are many new and diverse residents in rural areas but some people often don't seem open to new, younger, or different voices  
”

# ACCESSIBILITY IN BUILT ENVIRONMENTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Many locations across West Hants present barriers to accessibility for community members with physical disabilities or mobility challenges.**

Participants in the engagement process highlighted the urgent need for more accessible built environments in municipal and public spaces. Individuals shared experiences of being unable to access public buildings, local business, and municipal building due to inadequate physical environments that don't accommodate for the needs of all abilities. This includes not only physical accessibility in terms of ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms, but also ensuring that local businesses and community events are inclusive and welcoming to all.

Accessibility isn't just about physical spaces—it's also about making sure all community members can fully participate in the community. This includes access to programs and services, especially for groups that face barriers, like seniors, people with disabilities, and those with low incomes.

When people can't access what they need, it limits their ability to be part of community life. Inaccessible spaces and services can lead to social isolation, financial struggle, and poorer well-being for these individuals.

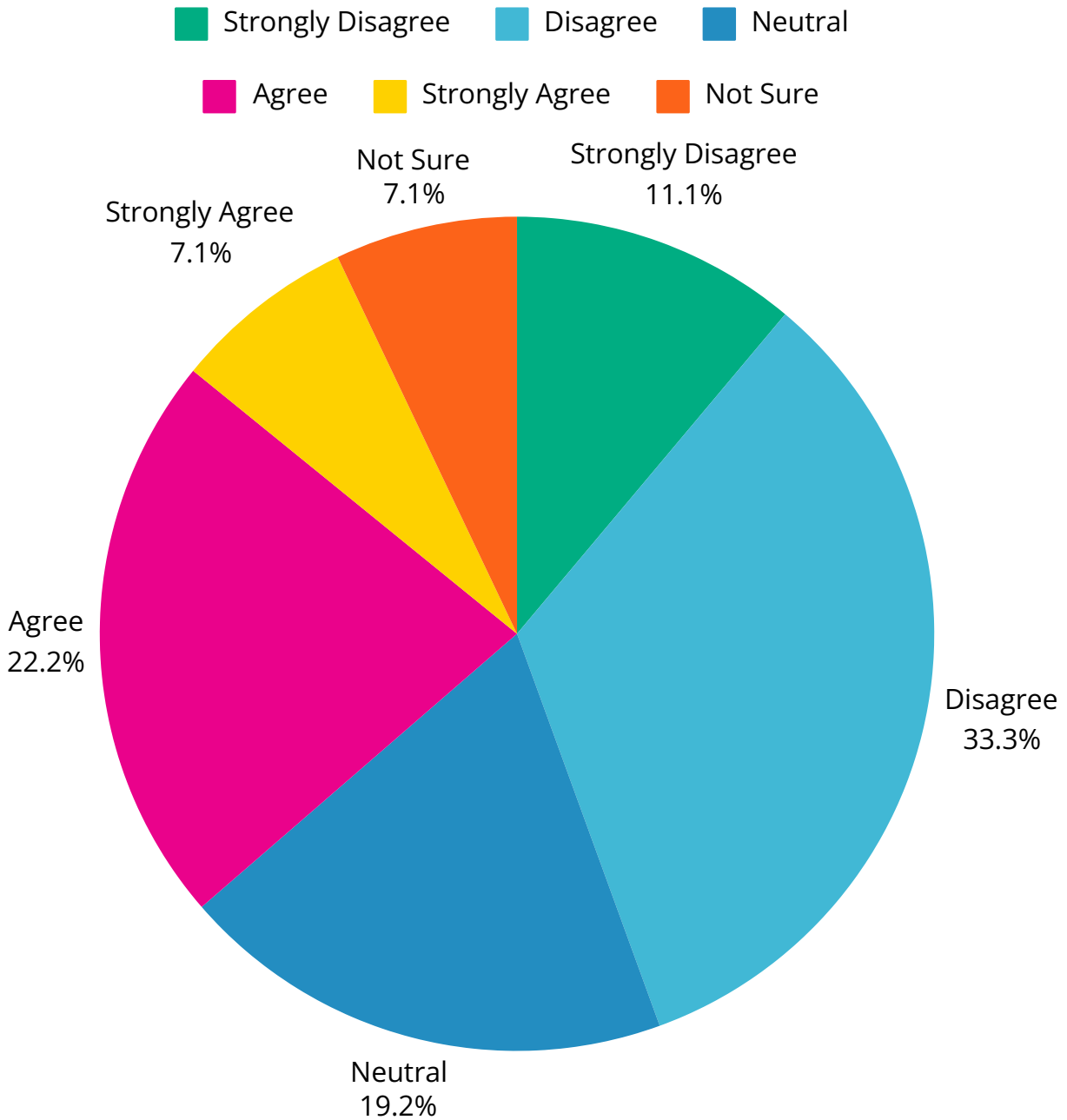
## A fully accessible Nova Scotia by 2030



The West Hants (Nova Scotia) 2022 Accessibility Strategy emphasizes the importance of **collaboration between the municipality and the community to achieve a fully accessible Nova Scotia by 2030**. To reach this goal, we need to work together to remove the systemic barriers that stop people with disabilities, equity-denied communities, and rights holders from taking part in all parts of community life.

## Survey Insights

32% of survey participants reported living with a disability. Of those, about 44% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: “Public spaces (e.g., parks, buildings, sidewalks, workplaces) in West Hants are accessible for people with disabilities or mobility challenges.”



## What To Do

---

Key areas to help address the accessibility barriers and gaps that exist within the community that were highlighted throughout the engagement process include:

**Increase public education and awareness:** Implementing initiatives to educate the public about accessibility issues and promote understanding and inclusion

**Provide greater training for staff and local community:** Providing training to municipal staff, local businesses, and community organizations on accessibility best practices.

**Create more accessible municipal programs and services:** Ensuring that all municipal programs and services are accessible to persons with disabilities, including addressing barriers related to financial accessibility, transportation, and the availability of tailored services for specific groups.

**Focus on equitable streetscapes:** Prioritizing the creation of safe and accessible public spaces by maintaining and enhancing sidewalks, ramps, lighting, and other infrastructure to facilitate mobility for all residents. This can include a need to focus on ensuring more communities have access to sidewalks and streetlights.

“ —

You have two different issues here. Physical accessibility for people and psychological fairness for people. (it) would be best treated individually.

– Survey respondent

# ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY

**A common idea in the discussions was how important the municipality is in building stronger community relationships and partnerships, helping with healing and reconciliation, and creating a truly inclusive West Hants by removing systemic racism.**

Residents stressed that achieving equity requires working together in a planned and focused way. They noted that racism and discrimination are deeply rooted in inequitable laws, policies, and practices that have been unfair for generations. Today's sources of power continue to perpetuate systems of imbalance.

We heard that **changing these systems requires new ways of working.** Building strong relationships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and residents, especially those from marginalized and equity-deserving groups, is a key first step.

These groups should have a say in decision-making and municipal policies. Community members also highlighted the power of storytelling, group discussions, and ongoing conversations to heal, share knowledge, and reduce racial bias.

By prioritizing key internal changes, the municipality can set a powerful example for the broader community, demonstrating a genuine commitment to dismantling systemic barriers and promoting anti-racism and inclusion.

When we say “the municipality” in this document, we are referring to the local government and municipal staff, including the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

**“Lead by example.** Commit to not only having an accessibility plan, but implementing it. Celebrate the good work done to date and keep momentum up. Fund and assign appropriate staff resources to these initiatives vs adding it on to other existing positions.  
-Survey respondent

”

## What To Do

---

The municipal leadership, staff, and services play a critical role in creating and supporting equitable community. Suggested actions include:



For example, **indigenization** can include institutions, policies, and practices that have traditionally been dominated by Eurocentric perspectives. It goes beyond simply including Indigenous people; it involves fundamentally changing the way things are done to reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

# ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY

Words from engagement participants

“

The municipality should look at internal operations to start: Hiring practices, training, and acknowledgment of the privilege of staff and council.

-Survey respondent

”

“

All municipal employees could actually respond/help community members they don't know

-Survey respondent

”

“

West Hants must show leadership in programming and the built environment.

-Survey respondent

”

“

Have more representation in council, in public spaces and in your marketing.

-Survey respondent

”

# RECONCILIATION

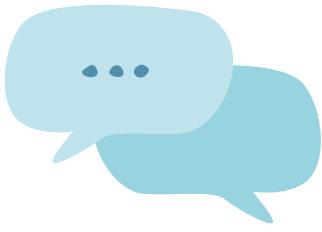
Reconciliation is about working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to address the legacy and ongoing impacts of colonization practices (e.g., residential schools), address past and ongoing harms and heal. Reconciliation is also about supporting the development of strong and healthy communities by improving essential services and infrastructure, such as safe housing and health and mental wellness.

Reconciliation is grounded in building and maintaining relationships, including nation-to-municipal relations, which are based on respect, partnership, recognition of the rights of the Original Peoples to this land, and understanding that Indigenous nations, like the Mi'kmaq, are self-determining.

Through engagement indigenous participants reported feeling harassed, being ignored, feeling less respect, receiving poor service and/or people using racial slurs against them. They reported that it was due to physical appearance, and/or education and income level. While they experienced this in public spaces, feedback especially focused on feeling a lack of services and support from municipal staff, especially in the area of housing, and from police. They also highlighted the need for greater Indigenous-specific supports to youth.

Other reports and research have also found that:

- **Indigenous persons who live off-reserve are falling between the gaps.** They cannot access programs and services in Indigenous communities, and often are denied services through provincial and municipal routes because the assumption is that they are provided supports through the federal government. This increases vulnerability, poverty, homelessness, mental health and overall wellness.
- Many Canadians' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours toward Indigenous persons remain heavily influenced by colonial stereotypes and do not recognize the impacts of Canada's colonial history and anti-Indigenous racism on creating disadvantages currently facing Indigenous peoples.

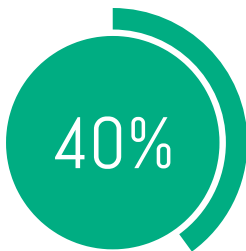


### **The RAD report shared specific suggestions shared by some Glooscap community leaders for improving the life quality for all members of the Glooscap community**

- Transportation accessibility
- More public spaces such as parks for the youth to gather
- A youth center with after-school programming
- More spaces for socialization (cafés, restaurants)
- Road repairs and the implementation of pedestrian walkways
- Beds allocated at local assisted living facilities for Indigenous persons
- Better access to health services
- Better trail maintenance
- Community gardens
- Creativity workshops for all
- Mental health and LGBTQ services
- Education
- More safe spaces for youth

### **Survey Insights**

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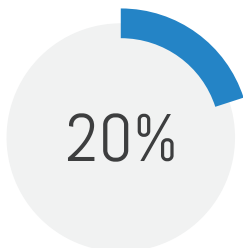


Of survey participants who self-identified as Mi'kmaw or Indigenous reported:

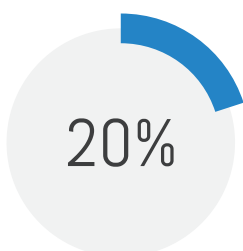
- being treated with less respect than other people a few times per month.

and/or

- being treated as invisible or ignored a few times per month.



Of survey participants who self-identified as Mi'kmaw or Indigenous strongly disagree with the statement "I feel safe expressing my identity (e.g., race, gender, ability, etc.) in public spaces"



Of survey participants who self-identified as Mi'kmaw or Indigenous reported that people act as if they are afraid of them, or they are dishonest at least once a week

“ —

When you're indigenous, you hear about all the murders. I know it's not happening a lot here, but you always have to have your guard up. I don't go too many places alone . . . I don't go too far, but I would like to go farther if I could.”

– RAD Report

# Strategic Actions

The numbers in the list below do not show which actions are more important than others. They are just there to help readers find the actions and their details in the appendix. The numbers also make it easier for people working on the actions to keep track and stay organized.

All the actions are connected, and they all work together to help achieve the goals of this plan.

**Strategic Action #1.** Heal and rebuild relationships between WHRM and equity denied communities.

**Strategic Action #2.** Create public spaces that promote diversity and history of the municipality.

**Strategic Action #3.** Through partnerships and funding opportunities, provide support to community groups and local businesses in building, operating, and maintaining inclusive spaces and inclusive workforce.

**Strategic Action #4.** Make municipal buildings and public spaces more accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

**Strategic Action #5.** Help make businesses, community organizations, and events more accessible and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities.

**Strategic Action #6.** Create better supports for youth, in particular teens, by increasing youth engagement opportunities and creating safe and welcoming spaces for young people.

**Strategic Action #7.** Improve safe accessible transportation infrastructure across West Hants.

**Strategic Action #8.** Improve access to municipal activities and programs.

**Strategic Action #9.** Amplify community history and support opportunities share and celebrate diverse cultures.

**Strategic Action #10.** Improve street scapes across West Hants including street lights, side walks, ramps.

**Strategic Action #11.** Develop and Implement Anti-Hate and Accessibility Education and the public.

**Strategic Action #12.** Develop and Implement Anti-Hate and Accessibility Education and Training for municipal staff.

**Strategic Action #13.** Strengthen the capacity of community organizations and local businesses to continue to promote hate-free communities.

**Strategic Action #14.** Provide support for those experiencing hate in the community and create protocols and mechanisms to report these incidents.

**Strategic Action #15.** Improve planning, zoning and how resources are allocated and shared in order to advance equity and address environmental racism and systemic injustice in our community.

**Strategic Action #16.** Increase representation of equity-denied communities across municipal positions, including positions of leadership.

**Strategic Action #17.** Increase representation of equity-denied communities across all municipal committees to build capacity and ensure all voices are included.

**Strategic Action #18.** Review and update policies, procedures, guidelines, and communications through an anti-hate, equity, and accessibility lens.

**Strategic Action #19.** Commemorate, honour, and/or celebrate heritage and diversity dates/months, such as African Heritage Month, National Indigenous People Day, etc.

**Strategic Action #20.** Build capacity within the municipality to act on, communicate, and review this plan.

**Strategic Action #21.** Support diverse businesses and enhance economic development for equity denied communities.

**Strategic Action #22.** Build awareness, educate and promote equity and accessibility among children and students.

**Strategic Action #23.** Conduct meaningful engagement with people with lived or living experience to assist in building out supports for people impacted by homelessness.



# COMMITMENT AND NEXT STEPS



“ —

We need an action plan with deliverables and timelines for accountability. Needs to involve community members in its development. May need to consider breaking this issue into smaller groupings to make the development of a plan more achievable.

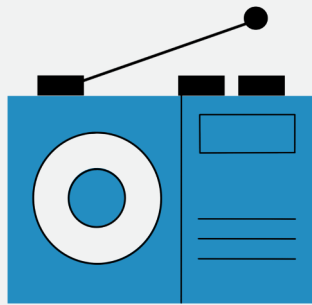
– Survey respondent

# THE MUNICIPALITY'S COMMITMENT

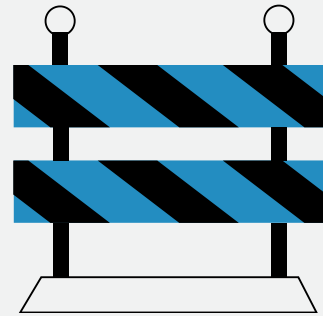
The municipality wants to be clear about the commitment to this plan:



The Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Diversity and Inclusion Community Advisory Committee will create detailed workplans.



The municipality will give a public update at least once a year using inclusive and accessible methods.



The municipality will work with residents to review this plan at least every three years to make sure it stays relevant.

## Some actions will need funding. When this happens:

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Diversity and Inclusion Community Advisory Committee together with municipal staff will prepare budget requests.
- Council will review these request as part of the full municipal budget, considering other priorities.

“

You (should) have a diversity/accessibility plan that's approved by residents and maintained and updated for accountability  
-Survey respondent

”



# APPENDIX A



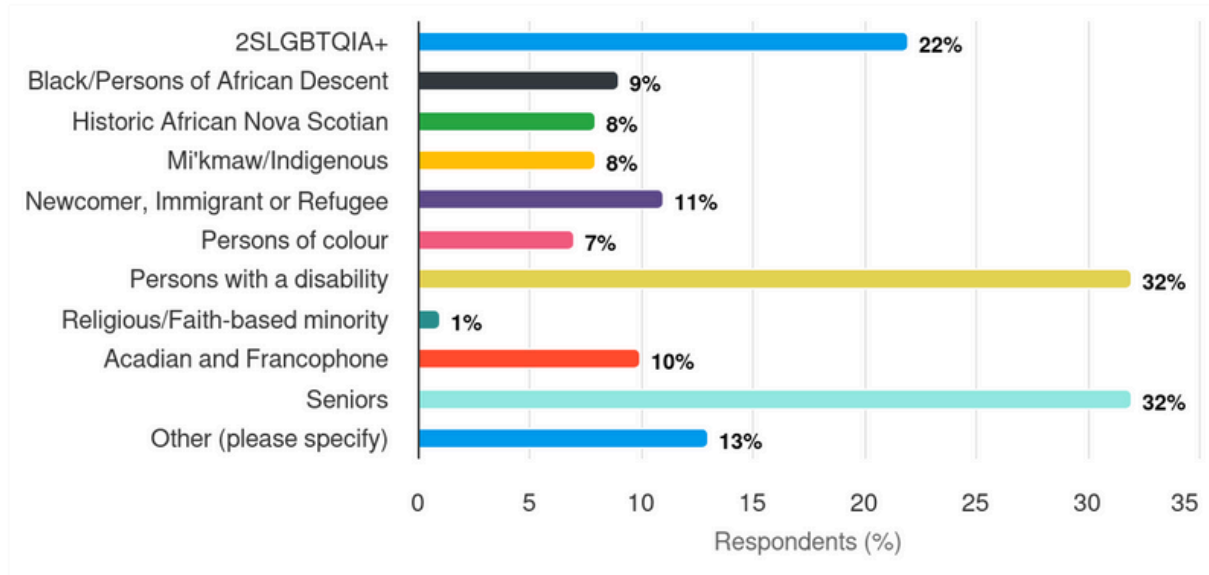
- Survey results

# SURVEY RESULTS

## Who participated

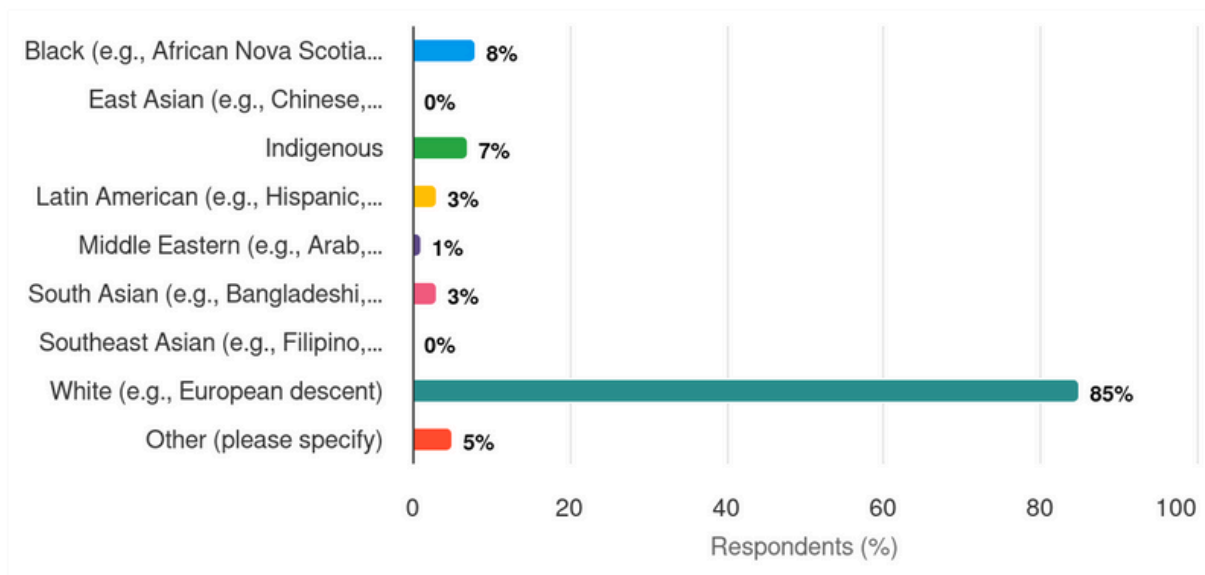
**Do you identify as being part of any of the groups listed below?**

(Select all that apply):



**Which race categories do you self-identify with?**

(Select all that apply):

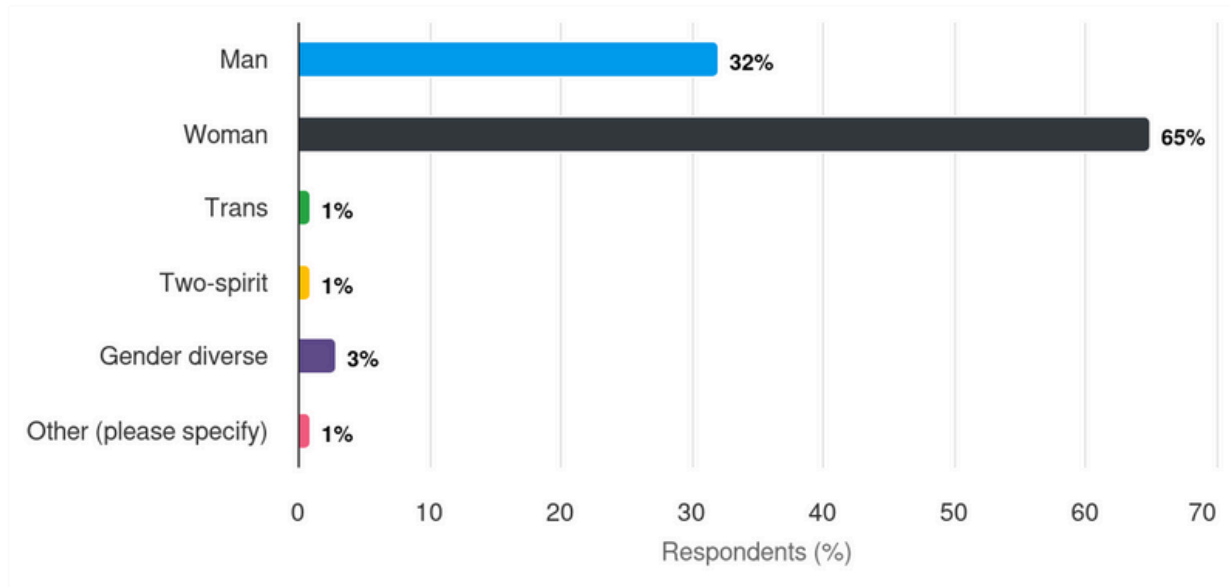


# SURVEY RESULTS

## Who participated

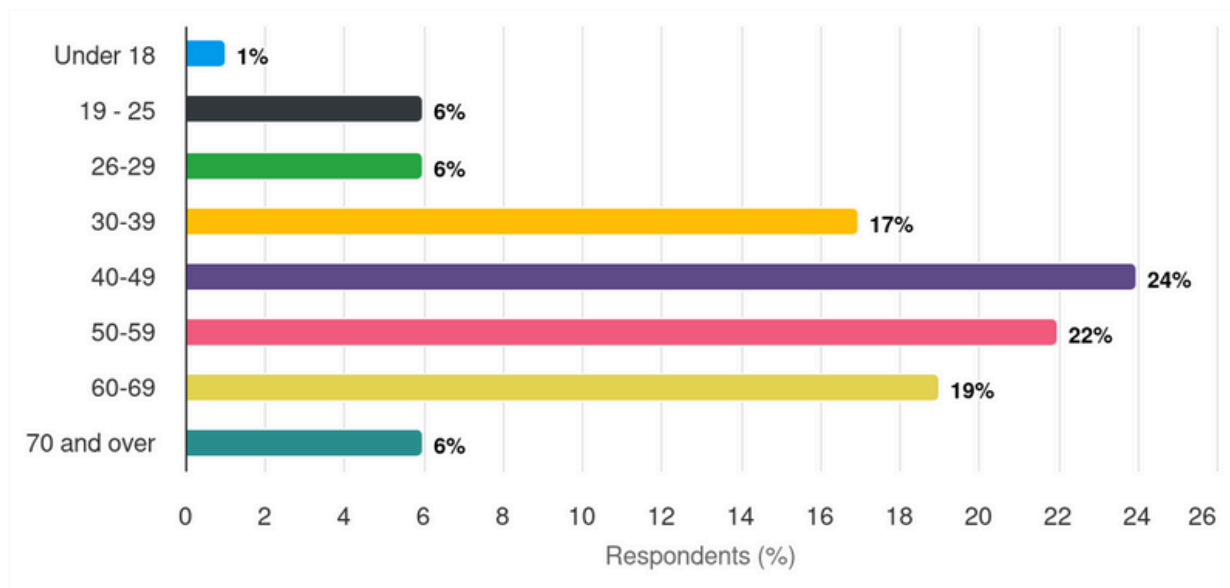
**Which gender categories do you currently identify with?**

(Select all that apply):



**Which age group do you belong to?**

(Select all that apply):

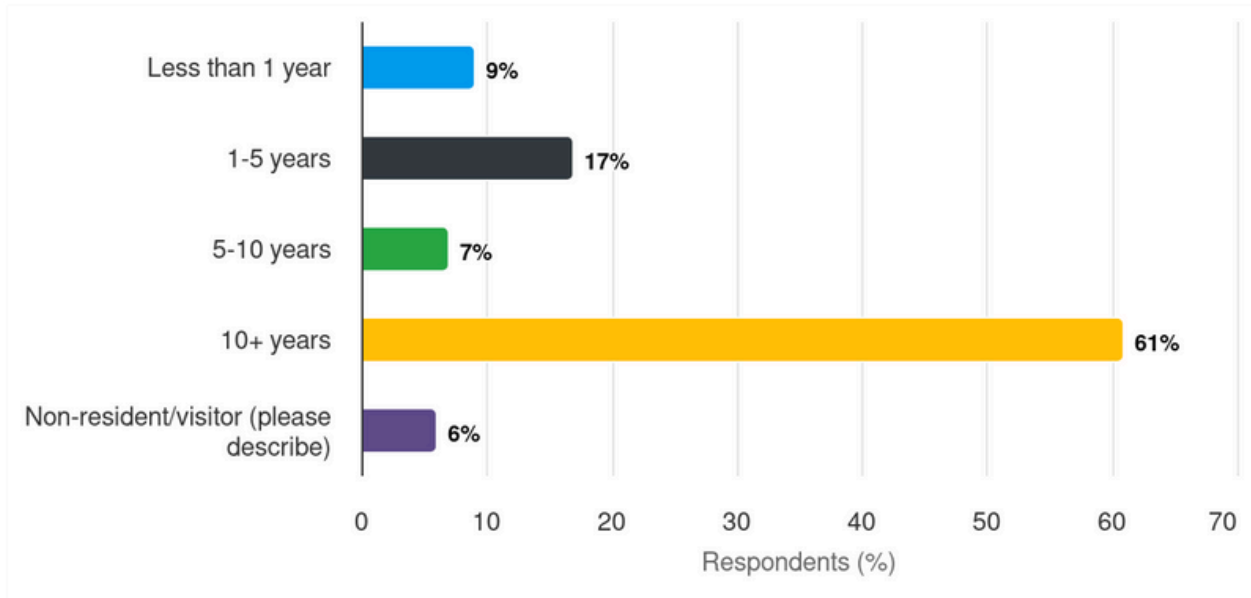


# SURVEY RESULTS

## Who participated

**How long have you been a resident of West Hants?**

(Select all that apply):



# SURVEY RESULTS

## Experiences

### I feel my community or culture is most accepted in West Hants when...

(Select all that apply)

Statement	%
I attend gatherings hosted by family or friends	67%
I am free to publicly celebrate holidays that are meaningful to me	61%
My cultural celebrations are shared by local news media	38%
I create or see public art or other public displays of my cultural heritage around the municipality	42%
I attend festivals and events hosted by the municipality or other local organizations	57%
I or members of my community are invited to contribute to the municipality planning efforts (e.g., advisory committees, engagement sessions)	51%
I see elected officials and municipal employees that share my background	42%

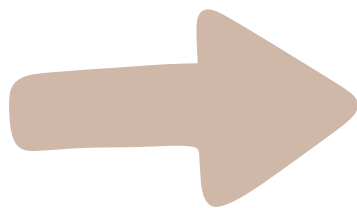
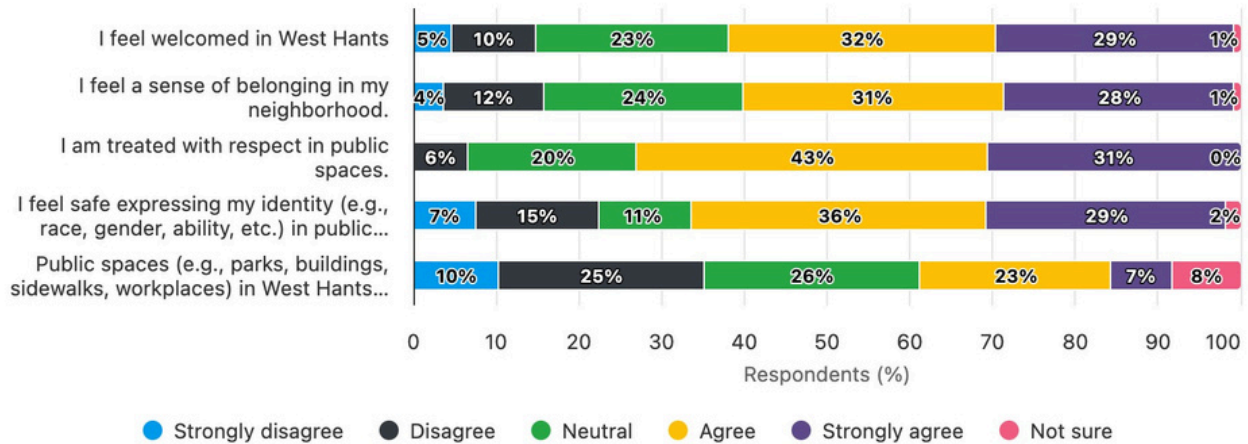
### Survey respondents also said that they feel their community or culture is most accepted in West Hants when...

- Community come together to protect or speak up and end bystander culture if someone is being victimized, gossiped about or targeted for injustice or unfair hardship
- We can learn about the cultures of others in a welcoming way.
- Council is more diverse
- Elected officials and municipal employees attend events within the community and speak with all people there
- Disability is accommodated in public spaces

# SURVEY RESULTS

## Experiences

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:  
(Select all that apply)



### An important note

**The experiences of equity-denied communities differ from the experiences of the majority of people.** For example, when asked to what extent do they agree with the statement *I feel welcomed in West Hants*, only 5% of survey respondents strongly disagreed. However:

- 18% of Individuals who identified themselves as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ group disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 43% of Black/Persons of African Descent disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 29% of Historic African Nova Scotians strongly disagreed
- 20% of individuals who identified themselves as Mi'kmaw or Indigenous strongly disagreed

# SURVEY RESULTS

## Suggestions

What can we do in West Hants to prevent racism and discrimination?



What would an accessible West Hants look like?



# SURVEY RESULTS

## Suggestions

What programs, activities, and services could the municipality create or change to help everyone feel included and like they belong?



To your knowledge, what should the municipality create to promote equity (fairness), fight racism, and improve accessibility for everyone?





# APPENDIX B.

- Detailed Actions

**Strategic Action #1. Heal and rebuild relationships between WHRM, the Mi'kmaq, and equity denied communities.** The RAD Report highlights the lack of trust between the public and the local politicians.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
1.1	Create a plan and invest in ongoing engagement between WHRM, Glooscap First Nation and Sipekne'katik First Nation to help ensure the actions within this plan address their concerns and challenges the experiences of people living and working in West Hants who are Indigenous.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
1.2	Create an engagement approach that considers the local culture, history and practices that support reconciliation and healing.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
1.3	Provide culturally appropriate compensation, food, and address other barriers, such as child care and transportation when engaging with persons with lived expertise and equity denied communities.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
1.4	To fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation (Call to action 43, TRC). Start by identifying actions and measures the municipality are already taking that may align with UNDRIP implementation goals and changes and new actions required.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
1.5	Deepen community connection pathways by developing indigenous and African Nova Scotian liaison positions to support the ongoing work needed to engage and work collaboratively with community members.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #2. Create public spaces that promote diversity and history of the municipality.** This can include work towards adopting anti-colonial community planning and ethical space approaches when building and designing municipal spaces.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
2.1	Develop a framework* to integrate an intersectional and reconciliatory lens into planning for a more equitable and inclusive West Hants. Ensure equitable representation of Indigenous and African Nova Scotian community members in the development of the framework and examination of spaces via engagement.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
2.2	Critically examine the naming of exist municipal assets, establishments, and municipal spaces.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
2.3	Update naming as appropriate. This process must follow the guidelines published by the Geographic Names Board of Canada.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
2.4	Critically examine existing municipal spaces against the framework and implement appropriate required changes to existing spaces to require compliance with the framework.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
2.5	Require all future municipal projects meet the inclusion requirements set out in the newly developed framework.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• WHRM Council</li> </ul>
2.6	Create education campaign for all municipal staff around the use of visual supports for community (such as pride flags, rainbow decals on vehicles) and increase the use of visual supports across the municipality.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

\*This work can be inspired by the [Planning for Equitable and Inclusive Cities Framework](#).

**Did you know?**

Changing places back to their original Indigenous names helps Indigenous communities reconnect with their history, laws, and languages. This is an important step for reconciliation.



**Strategic Action #3. Through partnerships and funding opportunities, provide support (e.g., funding, resources, training) to community groups and local businesses in building, operating, and maintaining inclusive spaces and inclusive workforce.**

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
3.1	Work with local organizations and businesses to develop a directory of existing safe and welcoming spaces in West Hants. Publicly share the list of partner organizations and inclusive community spaces.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
3.2	Create or enhance dedicated spaces that reflect the cultural traditions and needs of equity-denied communities. This could involve supporting the development of Indigenous- or African Nova Scotian-owned and operated community centres, cultural spaces, or the designation of specific areas within existing municipal facilities.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
3.3	Support businesses in understanding needs of communities and encourage ongoing community engagement with equity denied communities.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #4. Make municipal buildings and public spaces more accessible to people of all ages and abilities.** This is aimed at realizing a more accessible community and eliminating barriers to accessing municipal infrastructure and public spaces.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
4.1	Create a process to review and maintain the conditions of existing municipal infrastructure and public spaces that already meet accessible design standards.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
4.2	Evaluate/prioritize retrofits to existing municipal buildings/facilities that strive to meet Gold Certification accessibility requirements from the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHFAC). Strive to have all new municipal buildings and major renovation projects meet the requirements of RHFAC Gold.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
4.3	Commit a portion of the annual budget to go toward the installations and maintenance required for improving the accessibility of public buildings and public spaces.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Elected WHRM Council</li> </ul>
4.4	Conduct a review of zoning and land use bylaws to identify opportunities to improve accessibility and support aging in place.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
4.5	Evaluate and prioritize capital projects that have the potential to improve accessibility and equity. This can include establishing a standardized process in project planning stage, and accessibility impacts as a part of staff reports to Council.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Elected WHRM Council</li> </ul>
4.6	Create system to use of mapping platforms to improve way finding in public buildings.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #5. Help make businesses, community organizations, and events more accessible and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities** in alignment with Access by Design 2030: Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia and Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2022-2025).

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
5.1	Leverage Tourism NS and NS Events tool guide that includes guidelines to create a framework on how to make events more accessible for people of all ages and abilities.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> </ul>
5.2	Provide practical guidance and support to local businesses and community groups to enhance the accessibility of their built environments.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> </ul>
5.3	Promote all public establishments that meet accessibility standards. This could include publishing a list of the establishments on the municipal website.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
5.4	Implement incentives for renovations and new builds that aim to achieve Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification, including fast-tracking development application through the approval process.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
5.5	Establish a municipal grant program to financially support small businesses completing accessibility improvement projects.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Elected WHRM Council</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #6. Create better supports for youth, in particular teens, by increasing youth engagement opportunities and creating safe and welcoming spaces for young people.**

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
6.1	Partnering with youth focused community organizations to repurpose existing facilities and find new opportunities to target youth. <i>This could include peer support groups, social events, workshops, and access to resources relevant to their experiences. Within these youth spaces, or in partnership with 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, create dedicated programming and times specifically for queer youth.</i>	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Group</li> </ul>
6.2	Actively promote safe community spaces through schools, community centers, social media, and other channels frequented by youth. Highlight the safety and inclusivity of the spaces, particularly for queer youth, African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, and new comer youth.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Group</li> </ul>
6.3	Implement additional recreation programs for youth with disabilities, including accessible swimming programs.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Community Recreation providers</li> </ul>
6.4	Engage with local schools as part of the accessibility and equity and inclusive communities committees and have a designated role for schools in this group.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
6.5	Acquire budget resources to engage youth in the municipality's ongoing projects and initiatives.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #7. Improve safe accessible transportation infrastructure across West Hants.** Connectivity and transportation challenges were communicated throughout the engagement process across all groups, and previous reports and engagements (including the RAD consulting report). Transportation and connectivity issues impact equity-denied communities to a greater degree. Addressing these infrastructure challenges will support greater equity and accessibility for all groups throughout the province.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
7.1	Actively support community-based transportation providers including West Hants Dial-a-Ride and the Windsor Senior Citizen Bus Society.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
7.2	Increase support to enhance West Hants Dial-a-Ride to increase transportation capacity in the community.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
7.3	Implement pilots for accessible and fixed-route transit in rural parts of the municipality and examine geographical distribution of services when making decisions. This could include working with neighboring communities.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
7.4	Establish opportunities and incentives for accessible taxi service.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
7.5	Establish opportunities to further expand community-based transportation services across the Municipality. Including working with provincial and federal governments to identify cost sharing.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

“  
**Without a car here, you're kind of stuck**  
 - RAD Report  
 ”

### **Strategic Action #8. Improve access to municipal activities and programs.**

This can include implementing culturally relevant and targeted recreation activities/programs through joint partnership efforts with equity-denied groups including Indigenous community, African Nova Scotian community, and vulnerable youth.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
8.1	Review overall fee structure of municipal aquatics programs and explore equitable fee structure to reduce barriers for families and community members.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
8.2	Increase awareness of municipal programs and services targeted to equity denied communities, this could include create a publicly available list of programs.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
8.3	Find opportunities to provide transportation to free municipal events, programming and engagement targeting underserved and underrepresented communities.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
8.4	Create more social and recreational programs targeted to seniors.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
8.5	Partner with diverse groups including Indigenous community, African Nova Scotian community, and vulnerable youth, to implement and increase access to culturally relevant and targeted recreation activities and programs.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
8.6	Extend Inspire Fund to include transportation to recreation opportunities - eg., taxi, gas, etc.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
8.7	Work with Mi'kmaq partners, especially Glooscap First Nation, to support Indigenous athletics and support long-term athletic development (see calls to action 87-91).	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>

### Strategic Action #9. Amplify community history and support

**opportunities share and celebrate diverse cultures.** This action is intended to focus on fostering community cohesion, celebrating diversity, and building a stronger sense of belonging. This can include highlighting events that are already going this well (e.g., community groups, community festivals)

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
9.1	Work with Glooscap and other indigenous communities to create an awareness campaign focused on the Aboriginal rights holders in the region within which WHRM exists.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
9.2	Work collaboratively with communities, local artists, and groups to promote intercultural understanding and celebrate the histories, experiences, and cultures of diverse communities.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
9.3	Create and implement initiatives or activities that bring community members together to promote reduced isolation and increased feelings of inclusion and belonging (e.g., community kitchens, greater use of community breakfasts/dinners). Specific focus should be placed on isolated groups.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>
9.4	Work with Glooscap First Nation and other identified Mi'kmaq partners and Indigenous organizations to develop a strategy to support access to cultural knowledge for individuals living outside Mi'kmaq communities, especially for youth (see 2.5 calls to justice). This can include finding opportunities to tell stories and look back on histories as part of the healing process	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff</li></ul>

**Strategic Action #10. Improve street scapes across West Hants including street lights, side walks, ramps.** There should be a specific focus and target on improve accessibility for equity-denied communities such as Three Mile Plains.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
10.1	Create a Street Lighting Policy to guide staff and council in the installation, removal, and general administration of municipally owned streetlights.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
10.2	Conduct a needs assessment of sidewalks, streetlights, and curb cuts with a focus on growth areas, high-traffic areas and areas with high-density of equity-denied community members (including Three Mile Plains).	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
10.3	Develop a sidewalk/crosswalk remediation plan and plan for new street scapes elements with timeline and budget according to updated provincial standards.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
10.4	Develop a plan to increase streetlights based on the needs assessment findings, targeting high-density equity denied communities.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
10.5	Improve the condition and availability of sidewalks, curb cuts, and pedestrian crossings to comply with the CSA Accessible Design for the Built Environment B-651 standard.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
10.6	Create public education campaign on safe practices regarding sidewalk-less communities.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #11. Develop and Implement Anti-Hate and Accessibility Education and the public.** This should include a hub where learning resources and tools are made available and shared to increase awareness and understanding of all forms of hate, including for example, Anti-Indigenous Racism, Anti-Black Racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia and white supremacy.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
11.1	Develop an anti-hate and accessibility education resource hub where information on anti-racism, discrimination and hate can be made available for community members and local businesses.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DEIC/AAC</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
11.2	Identify existing resources that can be used and develop new resources with community organizations and groups for the resource hub.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DEIC/AAC</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
11.3	Create resources and tools to support business owners and business management in deepening their anti-hate and accessibility competencies and application of anti-hate practices within the workplace. These resources should be co-designed by engagement with local businesses and community.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
11.4	Create resources for public to recognize, address and respond to hate, creating a shared language around racism, discrimination and hate.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #12. Develop and Implement Anti-Hate and Accessibility Education and Training for municipal staff.** This should include learning resources and tools are made available and shared to increase awareness and understanding of all forms of hate, including for example, Anti-Indigenous Racism, Anti-Black Racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia and white supremacy.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
12.1	Specifically, train recreation, support, front-desk staff in the safe and proper use of adaptive recreation equipment. Ensure this training targets all staff who may speak with individuals about local programs or promote programs.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
12.2	Implement mandatory cultural training for all municipal staff and councillors and education the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq Nation in Nova Scotia, as well as training on the UNDRIP, Aboriginal and Treaty law, understanding Indigenous law and methodologies, as well as understanding Aboriginal-Crown relations. (see calls to action 57, TRC).	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
12.3	Develop and implement mandatory anti-hate and accessibility orientation for all elected council members and municipality staff.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
12.4	Develop and implement anti-hate and accessibility mandatory annual training for elected council members and municipality staff. Tailor training to role and function with a trauma informed approach.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

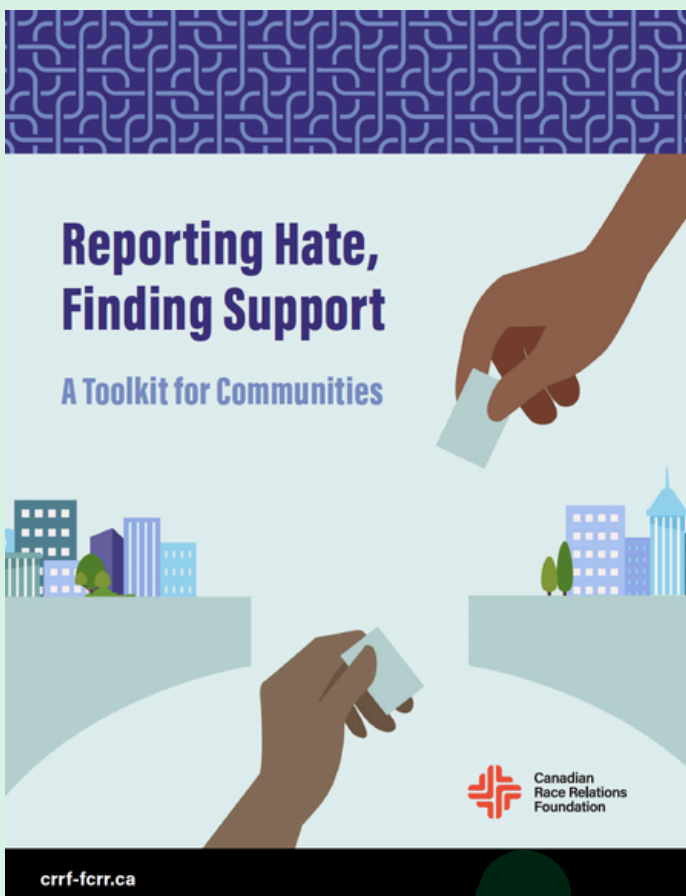
**Strategic Action #13. Strengthen the capacity of community organizations and local businesses to continue to promote hate-free communities.** Non-profits, community groups, grassroots organizations, such as Posse, and in some cases local businesses are doing work to end racism, discrimination and other forms of hate in order to make West Hants a welcoming safe hate-free place.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
13.1	Implement a grant to fund community-led projects to dismantle systemic racism, address hate incidents and support equity-denied communities (similar to the Halifax Anti-Black Racism Grants Program and the BC Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Grants).	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Business Associations and Networks</li> </ul>
13.2	Help create an inventory of available grants for community organizations that target anti-racism and anti-hate initiatives.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DEiC</li> <li>• Business Associations and Networks</li> </ul>
13.3	Create system navigation support for community organizations and businesses with barriers to help; them access and navigate grants that respond to dismantling systemic racism and hate.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
13.4	Support community organizations and local businesses efforts in obtaining grants to help facilities or projects that include requirements for gender inclusive washrooms (e.g., providing advocacy and navigation support).	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Business Associations and Networks</li> </ul>
13.5	Work with local groups to create safe and free community and municipal spaces targeted to equity-denied communities.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DEiC</li> </ul>
13.6	Work with community to create public education around visuals that contribute to systemic racism, bias and prejudice (e.g., confederate flags, symbols of white supremacy).	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DEiC</li> </ul>

## Did you know?

- Hate incidents are often underreported because victims and bystanders are unaware that they have experienced a hate crime or because they are unaware of their rights and the support available to them.
- Having good information is key to get a better picture of what is happening in our community and implement stronger policies.
- Reporting can help victims of hate to reclaim a sense of control, prevent things from escalating further.

To learn more, read the [Reporting Hate, Finding Support A Toolkit for Communities](#) by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF).



**Strategic Action #14. Provide support for those experiencing hate in the community and create protocols and mechanisms to report these incidents.** Acts of hate (including discrimination) undermine community cohesion and inflict significant harm on individuals and groups. This action focuses on strengthening both the response to and the accountability for such acts.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
14.1	Implement community response protocol and non-police reporting mechanisms for reporting various hate incidents in West Hants. Work with other municipalities to support this work.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> <li>• AVRCE</li> </ul>
14.2	Work with community organizations to establish supports for community members experiencing discrimination and hate.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
14.3	Work with the RCMP local detachment to improve awareness of reporting police and non-police reporting options among elected council members, municipality staff, and community members	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• RCMP</li> </ul>
14.4	Implement orientation and ongoing training for front-line staff and elected council members on how to safely manage incidents of discrimination or hate in municipal spaces.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
14.5	Collect data on discrimination and hate incidents reported by the community. This should include, for example, race-based data on hate activities in public spaces. Use data to inform future initiatives and focus areas and report back to community.	2031 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>



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#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
14.6	Establish municipal code of conduct and guidelines for all municipal staff, Council, and community members to follow and create training and education for all municipal staff around this action.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
14.7	Create practices and guidelines that consider the safety of staff and the public when addressing acts of hate in the community.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
14.8	Work with other levels of government including Mi'kmaq governments like Glooscap First Nation to support and address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ as outlined in the Call to Justice in the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DICC</li> </ul>
14.9	Further investigate in a trauma-informed way concerns around safety and security identified by Indigenous residents.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
14.10	Establish and train staff on intervening within facility - based issues with identified repercussions.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #15. Improve planning, zoning and how resources are allocated and shared in order to advance equity and address environmental racism and systemic injustice in our community.**

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
15.1	Create an equity lens framework to inform decision making about projects and initiatives being evaluated or completed by municipal staff and elected council members allowing a focus on environmental racism and equity. <i>An example to be considered is the Baltimore Sustainability Plan.</i>	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
15.2	Establish a standardized process in the project planning stage for evaluating and prioritizing capital projects to include consideration for the using of equity and environmental racism.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
15.3	Develop and implement an engagement strategy with Three Mile Plains community members to discuss and address current issues of environmental racism and inequity. Work with the Environment Unit (based in Halifax) to provide expertise on these engagements.	2025 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>



**An equity lens framework can help the municipality to consider the impacts of institutional discrimination and injustices.**

Decisions regarding the development of policies, procedures, regulations, and plans, or issuance of permits, must consider the impact on all equity-denied communities. Example questions for the framework could include:

- How has the project work plan been structured to support effective relationship building with equity-denied communities?
- Can the data available be disaggregated by race, income, geography, and other factors to understand how experiences differ between communities?
- How have equity-denied communities been engaged in the design of the process?

## **Strategic Action #16. Increase representation of equity-denied**

**communities across municipal positions**, including positions of leadership to create equal employment opportunities for all (this include all employment types, including part time, internships, etc).

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
16.1	Develop and implement an equitable employment and talent management policy and strategy that prioritizes equitable hiring and culturally appropriate recruitment and retention efforts.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff (HR)</li></ul>
16.2	Create coaching and mentoring leadership opportunities for equity-denied employees to advance in positions.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff (HR)</li></ul>
16.3	Find opportunities to use data to inform hiring and promotion into positions of leadership.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff (HR)</li></ul>
16.4	Work with equity denied communities to champion the recruitment and retention of these community members into municipal positions. This can include examining and removing barriers for equity denied communities applying positions, and allowing self-identification of demographic information upon hiring.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff (HR)</li></ul>
16.5	Undertake an anonymous survey to establish a baseline employee demographic and track the number of employees with disabilities, both diagnosed and self-identifying, with the intention of reflecting the diversity of the Municipality in the municipal workforce.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff (HR)</li></ul>
16.6	Create a respectful workplace policy, and formalize education material around harassment, bullying, hate and repercussions in the workplace.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Staff (HR)</li></ul>

**Strategic Action #17. Increase representation of equity-denied communities across all municipal committees** to build capacity and ensure all voices are included.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
17.1	Complete a review of all committees to examine if recruitment and membership includes adequate diverse representation (e.g., youth, African Nova Scotian communities, Mi'kmaq, and 2SLGBTQIA+ representation). Also focus on barriers to participation for these groups - including travel, compensation, child care, etc.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
17.2	Dedicate seats for Mi'kmaq and Black/African Nova Scotians on all municipal committees, and support targeted recruitment for these seats.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
17.3	Increase the representation of people with disabilities on all municipal committees.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
17.4	Explore opportunities for other diverse representation, including new Canadians, for Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committee	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff (HR)</li> </ul>
17.5	Create a more accessible intake processes across all committees to recruit more diverse membership.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff (HR)</li> </ul>
17.6	Develop streamlined processes ensuring committees work does not delay or stall due to municipal elections (e.g., October 2028, October 2032, etc.)	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #18. Review and update policies, procedures, guidelines, and communications through an anti-hate, equity, and accessibility lens.**

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
18.1	Develop a policy, procedure and guideline review tool and process to support ongoing reviews of existing and future policies from an anti-racist and equity perspective.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
18.2	Conduct a full review of municipal policies through an anti-racism lens and implement changes based on policy review process developed. This should include reforming all policies, strategies and municipal documents that continue to rely on concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands (Action 47, TRC). Begin this work early and continue to make improvements throughout the plan.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
18.3	Implement strategy for the use of plain language and accessible document formatting in all municipal public facing documents. This should include training for all relevant staff.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
18.4	Review current communications (e.g. websites, newsletters, social media, printed materials etc.) to identify where gaps in visual representation of racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, and other diverse groups of people exist. Develop a plan to perform this sort of review on a regular basis.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
18.5	Establish a dedicated stream of communication for accessibility-related information. Information should be available in digital and print formats.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
18.6	Create a policy (and implement) to ensure the use of Mi'kmaq language.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

## **Did you know?**

The International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) was declared by the United Nations to promote recognition, justice, and development for people of African descent. It provides a framework for governments, organizations, and communities to work together to take meaningful action and support this effort.

To learn more about the role of municipalities, please see the [guide for Canadian municipalities](#).



**Strategic Action #19. Commemorate, honour, and/or celebrate heritage and diversity dates/months, such as African Heritage Month, National Indigenous People Day, Treaty Day, Mi'kmaq History Month, etc.**

Honouring these dates is an opportunity to reflect on the dangers of hate, increase awareness, celebrate heritage, culture and the achievements and contributions diverse groups.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Leads
19.1	Create a list of commemorative dates to be publicly acknowledged*.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
19.2	Invite community leaders to provide recommendations for short-and long-term initiatives they see as appropriate to commemorate these dates.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> </ul>
19.3	Co-develop an annual calendar to honor or celebrate the commemorative dates. The calendar should include public campaigns and other tangible actions (e.g., providing funding or support for planning and hosting events and celebrations).	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC</li> <li>• DEIC</li> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
19.4	Allocate resources from existing municipal budget to execute the calendar activities.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected WHRM Council</li> </ul>
19.5	Establish a municipal proclamation for recognition of African Heritage Month.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected WHRM Council</li> </ul>



**\*In developing the calendar, the leads should consider federal and provincial commemorative events and international days and weeks currently observed by the United Nations.**

Some events mentioned by the community include: Access Awareness Week and African Heritage Month.

**Strategic Action #20. Build capacity within the municipality to act on, communicate, and review this plan.**

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
20.1	Hire a designated communication staff to support the development of a communication strategy in alignment with this plan and support ongoing community awareness of municipal programs and services.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
20.2	Amend communications plan to support the ongoing communication of the plan and its action items.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
20.3	Hire an Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator position within the municipality to oversee responsibilities related to inclusion, equity, diversity, and accessibility.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
20.4	Appoint a designated diversity and accessibility lead position per area/department to provide accountability, oversight and leadership to the equity, anti-racism and accessibility efforts of the municipality, ensuring the advancement and monitoring of this strategy.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Elected WHRM Council</li> </ul>
20.5	Develop a structured evaluation plan with metrics to accompany the equity, anti-racism and accessibility strategy, ensuring ongoing reporting, monitoring and communication of this strategy.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

## Strategic Action #21. Support diverse businesses and enhance economic development for equity denied communities.

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
21.1	Provide support to diverse businesses through collaboration with Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, and newcomer business owners to identify opportunities to promote local diverse businesses. For example, creating a directory of diverse business owners.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> <li>• Business associations</li> </ul>
21.2	Develop joint initiatives with Indigenous organizations and Indigenous owned businesses to create programs and events that foster connection and community building. This could include cultural events, workshops, language classes, or intergenerational activities.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
21.3	Create public education and awareness campaigns to increase the use of visuals supporting diverse communities by local businesses and organizations.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>
21.4	Design and implement guidelines/standards for local businesses to adopt a more equitable, inclusive, accessible practice throughout all stages of the recruitment and employment cycle (e.g. job posting, interviewing, onboarding, training for all staff and employee support).	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> <li>• Business associations</li> </ul>
21.5	Implement a grants or waive some fees to new minority-owned food businesses to promote a multi-cultural food landscape within the municipality.	2028 - 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• Business associations</li> </ul>
21.6	Adopt an inclusive procurement process to help promote local and social procurement opportunities.	2031-2034	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

**Strategic Action #22. Build awareness, educate and promote equity and accessibility among children and students.**

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
22.1	Advocate and promote early and ongoing education about the history of the region and diverse culture and history of West Hants.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DICC/AC</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
22.2	Advocate for the continued promotion of equity and diversity within local schools (e.g., Vibe).	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DICC/AC</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
22.3	Equip teachers with resources and training to examine their own biases and promote equity within their classrooms and respond to children’s questions about equity and accessibility.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> <li>• DICC/AC</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
22.4	Provide training and resources for municipal summer staff in camps and recreation staff to promote equity and respond to children’s questions about equity and accessibility.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Staff</li> </ul>

“ All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society.  
Convention on the Rights of the Child ”

**Strategic Action #23. Conduct meaningful engagement with people with lived or living experience to assist in building out supports for people impacted by homelessness.** *Engagement in this area was not conducted as part of the development of this plan.*

#	Recommended Sub-Actions	Timeline	Lead
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.	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff</li> </ul>
23.2	Develop a strategy for the municipality to prevent, address and end homelessness in alignment with the Provincial <u>Strategy</u> .	2025 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Staff</li> </ul>



The municipality can consult the [Toolkit for Communities: Considerations for Creating Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness](#) (2023) developed by Rempel, K., Griffiths, S., Lloyd-Smith, J., Kelly, S., Hines, B., & Kirk, A.



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