HALIFAX

Item No. 11.1.15
Halifax Regional Council
September 1, 2020

TO:　　　　　Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by

~~Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer~~

DATE:　　　　August 11, 2020

SUBJECT:　　 **Amendment to COVID-19 Administrative Order – Planning & Development Public Engagement**

ORIGIN

Staff initiated report addressing the process and procedures for Planning & Development public participation and engagement.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Sections 59(3), 219 and 219A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, as follows:

59(3)　　In addition to matters specified in this Act or another Act of the Legislature, the Council may adopt policies on any matter that the Council considers conducive to the effective management of the Municipality.

Public participation program
219　　*(1) The Council shall adopt, by policy, a public participation program concerning the preparation of planning documents.*
　　(2) The Council may adopt different public participation programs for different types of planning documents.
　　(3) The content of a public participation program is at the discretion of the Council, but it must identify opportunities and establish ways and means of seeking the opinions of the public concerning the proposed planning documents.

Engagement program
219A　　*(1) The Council shall adopt, by policy, an engagement program for engaging with abutting municipalities when the Council is adopting or amending a municipal planning strategy.*
　　(2) Subject to the regulations, the content of an engagement program is at the discretion of the Council.
　　(3) The Minister may make regulations respecting the content of an engagement program.
　　(4) The exercise by the Minister of the authority contained in sub-section (3) is regulations within the meaning of the Regulations Act. 2018, c. 39, s. 14.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council adopt the amendments to Administrative Order Number 2020-009-ADM, the *COVID-19 Administrative Order,* as set out in Attachment B of this report.

BACKGROUND

Staff are recommending that Planning & Development engagement practices be adjusted to respect health and safety requirements for societal gathering. For this reason, staff is initiating amendments to *Administrative Order Number 2020-009-ADM Respecting COVID-19*. An overview of the amendments can be found in Attachments A and B. These amendments provide clarity and flexibility so that public engagement can be adjusted to include virtual meetings, online portals, social media, mail and telephone formats. Whether or not meetings will be held online or in person will be determined on an as needed basis, in response to specific engagement needs, and in alignment with states of societal gathering and public health & safety protocols and Ministerial directives.

How we gather as a society has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how we will gather together in the future remains uncertain. It is possible that for public health reasons we will come in and out of states of gathering. Encouraging and finding ways to support civic participation is perhaps even more important when the community is in a state of widespread societal change. By adapting our approach to public engagement, we can continue working closely with our citizens and community, while respecting various states of societal gathering.

While we are still learning as a society and world how we should adapt to COVID-19, the practices we are suggesting are in keeping with Regional Council's previous direction to modernize and renew Planning & Development's engagement practices. The presence of COVID-19 will accelerate some of the changes to engagement HRM has already been moving towards. Key principles include:

- respecting the states of societal gathering;
- providing access to engagement opportunities through a variety of mediums;
- responding to legislative/regulatory process requirements; and,
- strengthening inclusion, improve our processes and remove barriers to participation.

It is proposed that a variety of engagement tools be used for an interim period until full public gathering can safely resume. In support of this, staff have completed a scan of best practices around online engagement, strengthening inclusion and addressing barriers to inclusion in online environments. Staff have also created a framework to help guide how to shape engagement based on different states of societal gathering.

DISCUSSION

As many Planning & Development engagement programs have been designed around in-person meetings, staff have been unable to continue with these formats as a result of public health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As it is anticipated that constraints on public gathering and social distancing requirements will continue, amendments to Regional Council policy regarding public participation programs are being proposed. These amendments provide greater flexibility so that engagement can be adjusted to include virtual meetings, online portals, social media, mail and telephone. Whether or not meetings will be held online or in person will be determined on an as needed basis, in response to specific engagement needs, and in alignment with states of societal gathering and public health & safety protocols and Ministerial directives.

The amendments being proposed provide that any of the following types of meetings may be held virtually, provided that they are not otherwise required to be held in person:

- meetings required under the 1997 Public Participation Resolution, including Public Information Meetings,
- meetings of a Planning Advisory Committee, Joint Planning Advisory Committee, Area Planning Committee or Public Participation Committee; and
- any meeting referred to under a Municipal Planning Strategy or Land-Use By-law.

The amendments being proposed also provide that a public participation program adopted by Council pursuant to Sections 219 or 219A of the *HRM Charter* and public engagement required for the purpose of gathering feedback on a planning application may be comprised of, wholly or in part, alternative public engagement, provided the public engagement is not otherwise required to be held in person. Alternative public engagement means public engagement facilitated through one, or a combination of, the following means: written correspondence, the internet, telephone, or meetings held virtually.

These amendments will provide Regional Council and staff with the flexibility to design engagement programs so that they can continue, while respecting the various states of public gathering and social distancing requirements.

Adapting Engagement to respond to Public States of Gathering
On July 29, 2020, Minister Porter, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, issued the following Direction under section 14 of the *Emergency Management Act*:

1. ***Effective at 8am on July 29, 2020****, [all municipalities and villages in the Province] may hold meetings exclusively in person if all the following conditions are met:*

   i)   *the total number of persons present does not exceed a gathering limitation imposed in a Health Protection Act order;*

   ii)   *all physical distancing requirements or other requirements imposed in a Health Protection Act order are met.*

2. *If the conditions set out in (1) cannot be met, the municipality or village must not hold meetings exclusively in person and must instead hold the meeting partly or wholly as a virtual meeting by video or telephone, and ensure that all of the following conditions are met:*

   i)   *the total number of persons present for any in person portion of the meeting does not exceed a gathering limitation imposed in a Health Protection Act order; and*

   ii)   *for any in person portion of the meeting, all physical distancing requirements or other requirements imposed in a Health Protection Act order are met.*

This direction will remain in place for the duration of the Provincial State of Emergency unless it is terminated earlier by the Minister[1].

Further to this, staff are recommending designing public engagement programs to respond to the state of public gathering. Three states have been identified:

- Highly restricted state of public gathering (pandemic uncontained, high rates of infection, mobility restricted)

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[1] https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Direction-of-Minister%E2%80%93Municipal-Meetings-29-July.pdf

- Limited state of public gathering (pandemic controlled, low rates of infection, mobility allowed, social distancing required)
- Large or Full state of public gathering permitted (pandemic ends, or public health indicates limited need for social distancing)

It is proposed that HRM utilize a variety of methods to adapt engagement methods in place of in-person meetings for an interim period until full public gathering can safely resume. These methods include virtual meeting software, extended engagement periods, social media websites, mail and telephone.

An overview of the general public engagement approach is provided in the table below for Council's information:

State of Gathering	Key Considerations	Authority for Proceeding
Heavily Restricted State of Public Gathering (pandemic uncontained, high rates of infection, mobility restricted)	• **Can you put off the public engagement program?** • Many people are in a state of shock, fear, grief, stress, and confusion and therefore may not be ready to engage, even if they are at home. • Engagements may proceed if public engagement cannot be put off, is deemed critical or necessary, and can be provided using on-line tools. • Decision on if to proceed with engagement should be evaluated on a case by case basis and subject to Director sign off.	• Requires Director Approval using COVID-19 report screening criteria. • If deemed critical, engagement would be in support of projects focused on public health and safety, fiscal health, core municipal services, or economic development or recovery. For detail on these classifications see Regional Council [Amendment to COVID-19 Administrative Order– Virtual Public Hearings Report](), dated May 26, 2020.
Limited State of Public Gathering (pandemic controlled, low rates of infection, mobility allowed, social distancing required)	• **Is it the right time to engage?** • **Are the community members willing to participate in engagement and can barriers to participation be addressed?** • **Is it possible to re-design or design the public engagement program using online tools as opposed to in-person tools?** • **Are there other more traditional methods that can also be used that would allow for physical-distancing but are non-digital (mail-outs/phone)?** • In order to protect public safety, online tools, or traditional tools such as mail or phone will be used as the primary vehicles for delivering engagement.	• Business Unit to determine appropriate online and traditional engagement methods based on operational needs. • If deemed necessary, in person meetings or engagement events may be held, and be subject to public health requirements and Ministerial directives, and any Business Unit specific operational requirements. * • In person meetings or engagement events must be designed with Health and Safety in mind and incorporate procedures to minimize risk of contraction of COVID-19. HRM Health & Safety operational procedures must be adhered to.

	• If an in-person meeting is deemed critical to the process, this may be considered subject to Director sign off. • Group gatherings might be psychologically difficult or undesired for citizens, even if there are is public health direction allowing limited gathering.	
Large or Full Public Gathering Permitted (pandemic ends, or public health indicates limited need for social distancing)	• **Can you continue to provide a mix of online and in-person tools for engagement as opposed to solely in-person meetings?** • In person meetings may be permitted assuming that appropriate health and safety precautions are taken. * • Group gatherings might be psychologically difficult or undesired for citizens, even if there are is public health direction allowing limited gathering. • A mix of online and in-person tools should continue to be provided to reflect the modern lives of citizens and the technology available for community outreach.	• Regular practice to resume in accordance with provincial public health requirements. *
* As we learn more about what measures will be required operationally to assure safe gathering, this information will be provided to Council. Should it be determined an in person meeting is required, meeting safety procedureswill be established in accordance with provincial public health requirements and HRM operational safety procedures (masks, hand washing, sanitizer, social distancing etc.)		

Online Engagement Best Practices
To support staff in designing online engagement, a scan of online engagement design resources and tools and diversity and inclusion resources revealed the following best practices. Addressing inclusion and barriers to participation in engagement is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

- **Design engagement programs to respond to different states of gathering**
  - For an engagement program that is directed by Regional Council that will span several months, a public participation program should:
    - Reflect different states of gathering so that no additional direction is required from Council and the engagement program is adaptable to the state of gathering.
    - Continually assess if the community or stakeholders are ready and able to participate in engagement as part of the engagement process.
  - Conduct pre-engagement, particularly when working with underrepresented groups or communities, to identify the form of engagement that works best for their needs.
  - Consultation with area councillors may also help to determine appropriate engagement mechanisms for a given community.

- **A combination of self-directed and one-on-one engagement addresses a wide variety of barriers to participation**

- o Engagement can occur in real-time (same time/synchronously), or self-directed (separately/asynchronously).
- o Shape Your City is the corporate online engagement platform, and HRM's preferred platform for self-directed engagement. A list of Shape Your City tools is found in Attachment C.
- o Microsoft Teams is the preferred platform for real-time engagement and has been rolled out to all staff.
- o One-on-one engagement is a support most staff persons provide on projects that is often overlooked as a valuable method to support reducing the widest range of barriers to engagement.
- o Self-directed engagement helps to address barriers concerning personal resources for participants.

- **Format real time meetings to accommodate smaller groups**
  - o It is easier to host smaller groups than larger groups when managing a real time workshop or group dialogue on-line.
  - o Pre-registration for meetings might be required when managing an unknown number of participants.
  - o When managing large groups more staff resources may be required in supporting the online conversation and dialogue.
  - o Tools need to be able to support the number of total participants, but engagement events can be broken down into smaller groups.
  - o To create community connections with stakeholders or underrepresented groups, small group formats may help with information sharing and building of trust.

- **Allow adequate time for participation in engagement**
  - o The amount of time you can hold attention in an online meeting is typically less than an in-person meeting.
  - o Demands for individuals in social isolation are greater, more time should be provided to ensure engagement is not rushed.
  - o If creating a self-directed program, time is needed for active participation, as well as compiling information, resharing, and allowing time again for participants to validate this material.
  - o Engagement timelines that are being redesigned to fit an online environment may be extended for these reasons.

- **Provide people with multiple opportunities to participate**
  - o Use both online and more traditional methods such as phone or mail out.
  - o Larger engagement programs can draw on a wide-range of online tools.
  - o Smaller programs may just require a small outreach and use of one or two tools.
  - o In most instances it will be important to allow for more traditional methods such as phone and mail to support online tools and ensure individuals without computer access can participate in the engagement program.
  - o Engagement may also need to be advertised through more traditional methods such as newspaper/radio or councillors/community leadership.
  - o Consider the audience in selecting tools and approaches. The same tools may not be used for developing new playground equipment as compared to changes to seniors' snow shoveling programs.

- **Consider the design of the backroom environment**
  - o With staff working remotely in many cases, training and organizing the back end of engagement is an important component.

- o   Logistics for designing and managing the conversation should be thought through before finalizing the participation program.
- o   Budgets are constrained and engagement should be designed accordingly.
- o   Shape Your City (SYC) allows three levels of control: Public – anyone can view this project; Paneled – anyone can view the project, but only select panelists (panelists are created via custom groups set up of SYC users) can participate; and Protected – only selected groups can participate. The group is created by the admin of SYC users.
- o   Moderation support is offered on SYC for some tools to hide inappropriate comments.
- o   For virtual meetings associated with discretionary planning processes, such as Public Information Meetings, staff support should still be provided to record meeting notes.

Strengthening Inclusion and Addressing Barriers

The presence of COVID-19 can be used to accelerate changes to engagement practices in HRM, improving our processes and removing barriers to participation. It is important to address barriers to engagement to maximize interest and participation. It is also important to consider that vulnerable populations may be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, which causes questions of inclusion and access to be even more critical to engagement design.

Some common barriers to engagement are:

Personal Resources	Motivation and Attitude	Cultural Factors
• Limited personal resilience • Limited access to the internet • Limited digital literacy • Limited education and • capacity • Limited money • Physical and mental health issues • Limited mobility • Geographic isolation • Disability and sensory impairments • Limited confidence • Limited social networks	• Limited knowledge of benefits of engagement • Limited knowledge of engagement activities • Limited interest in the subject • Limited understanding of the subject • Limited trust of decisionmakers • Consultation 'fatigue' • Unmet expectations	• Minority groups • Language and literacy • Values and beliefs • Community divisions
Source: *Inclusive Community Engagement: in a time of physical distancing. Capire, 2020. Retrieved from: www.capire.com.au, May 2020.*		

Groups or sections of the population may experience multiple barriers. Examples include women, the elderly, adolescents, youth and children, persons with a disability, indigenous populations, refugees, migrants, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Questioning (LGBTIQ+) people, and minorities. Many of these groups experience the highest degree of socio-economic marginalization. Other groups, such as residents of public housing, university and college students, parents and caregivers may have increased stressors and vulnerabilities as well. The COVID-19 pandemic is predicted to have significant impacts on many people and sectors over time.

It is important to find a balance between HRM's engagement needs and the community's needs, as well as continuing civic engagement in the important conversations facing our community. Several actions can address or minimize the barriers:

- • One-on-one meetings can be a standard engagement practice incorporated into all programs and are one of the best tools for minimizing a wide range of barriers to engagement.

- Pre-engagement can be used to test community readiness and willingness to be engaged, as well as identify which tools are the most desirable.
- When working with underrepresented groups, it is important to work with community leadership (Area Councillors, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Community Leadership contacts) to understand if the community is ready to be engaged. Time invested before setting the engagement program can help to understand community needs and identify connection points.
- More traditional methods for communication such as mail, phone, radio and newspaper will help to supplement online engagement and address barriers such as computer literacy, limited social networks and access to the internet.
- The simple practice of sharing information, particularly at the outset of a project or change to policy, can build community awareness and capacity. Sometimes, the amount of learning required at the front-end of a project can take additional time that was not anticipated but can help to reduce barriers to understanding and trust.
- Online engagement tools often have embedded tools for accessibility, such as voice to text translation. Other examples of adjustments, such as verbally describing visual images used in a presentation or considering the scale and font of text. These practices may help in overcoming disability or sensory impairments. Best Practices around online accessibility can be found in Attachment D.

Legislative Requirements

The *HRM Charter* (Charter) stipulates the broad legislative requirements for community engagement. Section 219 of the Charter requires that Regional Council adopt a public participation program in the preparation of planning documents. Further, under section 219A, Regional Council is also required to engage with adjacent municipalities in the preparation of planning documents. The content of engagement programs is at the discretion of Council, however the ways and means of seeking the opinion of the public regarding the draft planning documents must be identified by policy. Regional Council's 1997 Resolution Regarding a Public Participation Program for Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments (1997 Public Participation Resolution) satisfies this requirement.

A copy of the 1997 Public Participation Resolution can be found in Attachment E. Under the resolution, Municipal Planning Strategy amendments are categorized as either local or regional in nature. Projects of a regional nature follow a customized public participation program, generally established by Regional Council at the time of initiation. Examples include large policy projects such as the Centre Plan, Regional Plan or region-wide amendment packages on singular policy issues like Cannabis or Secondary Suites. Some Site-Specific Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy amendments also will follow a regional program if deemed necessary. Otherwise Municipal Planning Strategy amendments must follow the local participation program as set out in the 1997 Public Participation Resolution. This requires the Planning Advisory Committee to hold a public meeting regarding any proposed amendments, or if there is no Advisory Committee, staff will lead the public meeting.

Beyond Provincial legislative requirements, in some planning areas, the applicable Municipal Planning Strategy or Land Use By-law may identify specific consultation requirements for Public Participation. Several Plans require the creation of a Public Participation Committee, to be engaged if a type or scale of development is being pursued. An overview of these land use policy and by-law requirements is provided in Attachment F.

In addition to these legislative and regulatory process requirements, engagement practice frequently involves consultation over and above what is required within the 1997 Public Participation Resolution. In certain projects over the past years, unique engagement tools have been implemented for projects inclusive of public workshops, surveys, public participation committees, live-streaming and on-line portals.

Summary
It is proposed that a variety of engagement tools be used for an interim period until full public gathering can safely resume. In support of this, staff have completed a scan of best practices around online engagement, strengthening inclusion and addressing barriers to inclusion in online environments. Staff have also created a framework to help guide how to shape engagement based on different states of societal gathering.

The proposed amendments provide clarity that Regional Council engagement programs and policy allows for meetings to be hosted in virtual environments. It also provides staff with direction to create engagement formats that are responsive to various states of gathering and to consider the health and safety of participants and staff in designing these programs, using a wide range of tools, including one-on-one contact, community networks and the Shape Your City Platform.

The amendments being proposed provide that any of the following types of meetings may be held virtually, provided that they are not otherwise required to be held in person:
- meetings required under the 1997 Public Participation Resolution, including Public Information Meetings,
- meetings of a Planning Advisory Committee, Joint Planning Advisory Committee, Area Planning Committee or Public Participation Committee; and
- any meeting referred to under a Municipal Planning Strategy or Land-Use By-law.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding to provide engagement is budgeted in the 2020/21 annual budget. No additional costs or savings are anticipated for holding virtual engagement instead of in-person public engagement.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The primary risk is a breakdown of the technology during a virtual meeting. Good supporting data based on Council meetings indicate that the technology is robust enough to allow for virtual meetings. This can be further mitigated by testing of the technology and instruction to users. Network issues can sometimes be with the provider for Teams or the internet provider for the various participants and could impact the ability to participate. Mitigation is participation via phone.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No formal public engagement has been undertaken, however, staff have been receiving requests from the public and developers regarding when engagement will be fully reinstated. As noted above, many other municipalities, large and small, have been successfully holding virtual public hearings and meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no negative environmental impacts to the recommendation. A reduction in the production of reports and associated energy costs for in-person meetings, may have a positive impact.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may choose to use a different approach to host public meetings and public engagement. This is not the staff recommendation.

2. Council may choose not to provide virtual meetings and defer to Ministerial direction on allowing meetings to be held in person, provided the required conditions regarding physical distancing, gathering limitations and other public health requirements can be met.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Showing proposed changes to Administrative Order Number 2020-009-ADM
Attachment B - Amending Administrative Order
Attachment C - List of Shape Your City Tools
Attachment D - Best Practices for Online Accessibility
Attachment E - 1997 Resolution Regarding a Public Participation Program for Municipal Planning
          Strategy Amendments
Attachment F - Public Engagement Scan HRM Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-Laws
          June 2020

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Kate Greene, Regional Policy Program Manager, 902.225.6217

-ATTACHMENT A – SHOWING PROPOSED CHANGES TO AO 2020-009-ADM-

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 2020-009-ADM
RESPECTING COVID-19

BE IT RESOLVED AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER of the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality under the authority of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter,* as follows:

Short Title
1.   This Administrative Order may be known as the *COVID-19 Administrative Order*.

Interpretation
2.   In this Administrative Order,

(a)   "alternative public engagement" means public engagement facilitated through one, or a combination of, the following means: written correspondence, the internet, telephone, or meetings held virtually;

(aa)   "grant" includes rent subsidies, property tax exemptions, less than market value property sales and leases, annual cash grants, and allocations from the Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve and Community and Events Reserve;

(b)   "policy" means a resolution of the Council that is required, pursuant to the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, to be recorded in the by-law records of the Municipality and includes an Administrative Order and the Terms of Reference for the HRM Grants Committee; ~~and~~

(c)   "reserve" means a reserve as defined by clause 3(c) of the *Financial Reserves Administrative Order*~~.~~; and

(d)   "virtually" means appearing by video, by telephone, or by a combination of video and telephone.

Application
3.   Notwithstanding any other policy of Council, a

(a)   grant may be allocated or awarded by Council without the HRM Grants Committee or HRM Special Events Advisory Committee reviewing, evaluating, or recommending the grant;

(b)   grant may be allocated or awarded by Chief Administrative Officer without a peer jury reviewing, evaluating, or recommending the grant; and

(c)   withdrawal from a reserve may be authorized by Council without the Audit and Finance Standing Committee reviewing and making a recommending on the impact to the Reserve.

Public Hearings
3A.   In accordance with section 1 of Appendix A of Administrative Order One, the *Procedures of the Council Administrative Order*, the Rules for the conduct of a public hearing by the Council and a Community Council are stated in Schedule 1 to this Administrative Order.

3B.   (1)   Notwithstanding any other policy of Council,

(a)   a public meeting required by a public participation program adopted by Council pursuant to section 219 or 219A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* may be held virtually;

(b)   a public participation program adopted by Council pursuant to section 219 or 219A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* may be comprised of, wholly or in part, alternative public engagement;

(c)   a public meeting required by the 1997 Resolution Regarding a Public Participation Program for Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments may be held virtually;

(d)   a public meeting required for the purpose of gathering feedback on a planning application may be held virtually;

(e)   public engagement required for the purpose of gathering feedback on a planning application may be comprised of, wholly or in part, alternative public engagement; and

(f)   a meeting of a Planning Advisory Committee, Joint Planning Advisory Committee, Area Planning Committee or Public Participation Committee may be held virtually.

(2) If

(a)   a public meeting under 3B(1)(a), (c) or (d); or

(b)   a meeting under 3B(1)(f);

is held virtually under subsection 1, such meeting shall be in place of and in full satisfaction of in person meetings.

(3)   If public engagement under 3B(1)(b) or (e) is held through alternative public engagement, such engagement shall be in place of and in full satisfaction of in person public engagement.

(4) Notwithstanding section 4, if a meeting or public engagement has started to be held virtually or through alternative public engagement under subsection 1, but has not been completed before this Administrative Order terminates, such meeting shall continue to be held virtually and such engagement shall continue to be held through alternative public engagement.

(5)   This section shall not apply to that portion of the public engagement or public meeting that is required by a municipal planning strategy, by-law, or development agreement to be held in person.

Termination Date

4.   Subject to subsection 3B(4), this Administrative Order terminates on the earlier of

(a)   the date and time determined by Council, by resolution; or

(b)   at 11:59 pm on March 31st, 2021.

Schedule

5.   A Schedule attached hereto shall form part of this Administrative Order.

Done and passed this 12th day of May, 2020.

_____
Mayor

_____
Acting Municipal Clerk

I, Sherryll Murphy, Acting Municipal Clerk of the Halifax Regional Municipality, hereby certify that the above noted Administrative Order was passed at a meeting of Halifax Regional Council held on May 12, 2020.

_____
Sherryll Murphy, Acting Municipal Clerk

SCHEDULE 1
RULES FOR PUBLIC HEARING DURING COVID-19

Application
1.   ~~(1)~~   These Rules shall apply equally to a public hearing conducted by the Council and a Community Council until this Administrative Order terminates.

~~(2)   In this Schedule,~~

~~(a)   "virtually" means appearing by video, by telephone, or by a combination of video and telephone.~~

Advertising Public Hearing
2.   (1)   A public hearing at the Council shall be advertised to commence at 6:00 p.m., or such other time as set by resolution of the Council.

(2)   A public hearing at a Community Council shall be advertised to commence at 6:00 p.m., or such other time as set by resolution of the Community Council.

(3)   Advertisements shall only be placed for the first date of a public hearing and shall state that if the public hearing cannot be concluded at the advertised date, it will continue on a date determined by the Council or the Community Council at the public hearing.

(4)   The advertisements must indicate the date and time by which a person needs to:

(a)   contact the Office of the Clerk, and the information that must be provided to the Office of the Clerk, to be added to the Speaker's List; and

(b)   provide written submissions to the Office of the Clerk to be distributed.

Location
3.   Public hearings will be held virtually.

Written Submissions
4.   (1)   A person who wishes to provide a written submission in respect of any matter which is the subject matter of a public hearing shall direct the submission to the Office of the Clerk.

(2)   Submissions shall be received in the Office of the Clerk no later than the date and time indicated in the advertisements under subsection 2(4) of this Schedule.

(3)   The Clerk shall distribute to the Council all submissions received by the date and time indicated in the advertisements under subsection 2(4) of this Schedule.

Speakers' List
5.   (1)   A Speakers' List will be prepared by the Office of the Clerk.

(2)   A person wishing to speak at a public hearing shall provide to the Office of the Clerk their name, community of residence, and any other information required in the advertisement under subsection 2(4) of this Schedule.

(3)   If a speaker represents a group, they shall indicate the name of group they represent both on the Speakers' List and when they address the Council or the Community Council during the public hearing.

(4)   A person who provides the required information within the date and time indicated in the advertisements will be added to the Speaker's List.

Before Public Hearing Opened

6.   Before the public hearing is opened:

(a)   the Presiding Officer shall ask staff for a presentation;

(b)   staff shall then be given an opportunity to virtually provide an explanation of the matter being considered and the staff recommendation to the Council or the Community Council; and

(c)   following the staff presentation, if any, Members may ask staff questions of clarification only.

Opening of Public Hearing

7.   (1)   The public hearing shall then be opened and:

(a)   the applicant, or designate, shall be invited to address the Council or the Community Council and if the applicant, or designate, decides to speak, they shall be given ten (10) minutes to present their proposal; and

(b)   after the applicant, or designate, presents the proposal, the Members may ask the applicant questions of clarification and the applicant, or designate, shall respond to such questions.

(2)   The applicant, or designate, may only address the Council or the Community Council virtually.

(3)   If the applicant, or designate, has previously provided an electronic presentation to the Office of the Clerk, in a format acceptable to the Clerk, staff will display the presentation and the applicant, or designate, will provide all the commentary on it and staff will advance the presentation to the next slide when requested to do so.

Explanation of Speaking Rules

8.   The Presiding Officer shall then explain speaking rules as set out in section 9.

9.   Each speaker shall

(a)   be given five (5) minutes to address the topic;

(b)   be required to state their name, and the name of the community in which they reside;

(c)   keep their comments respectful, on topic and directed at the Presiding Officer; and

(d)   not debate points of view expressed by other speakers.

10.   During a public hearing:

(a)   the Clerk may, upon receiving a request, advise members of the public where they appear on the Speakers' List;

(b)   the Clerk may notify the Council if the connection is lost with a speaker and attempt to reconnect with them and, if unsuccessful, Council or the Community Council may move on to the next speaker;

(c)   at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, the Council or Community Council may take a recess every hour; and

(d)   no applause or other expressions of emotion, inappropriate language, outbursts or criticisms aimed at individuals or groups will be condoned.

Calling Speakers

11.   The Presiding Officer shall then call the speakers in the order on the Speakers' List, and if:

(a)   a person is not virtually present when their name is called, they will be given an opportunity to speak after everyone on the Speaker's List has been called; or

(b)   a speaker has been disconnected and the attempt to reconnect was unsuccessful, they will be given an opportunity to speak for the remainder of their 5 minutes after everyone on the Speaker's List has been called.

12.   If it is necessary to adjourn the public hearing to another date, the Presiding Officer shall direct those on the Speaker's List at the initial advertised date who did not have the opportunity to be heard and still wish to address the Council to speak to the Clerk.

13.   At the continuation of a public hearing on a second or subsequent date:

(a)   only those whose names are on the Speakers' List and were not heard at the initial advertised date shall be permitted to speak; and

(b)   there shall be no substitution of names permitted.

14.   After all the people have spoken, the Presiding Officer shall invite the applicant or designate to virtually respond to the points raised by the speakers, and if the applicant or designate, decides to speak, they shall be given five (5) minutes to speak.

Close of Public Hearing

15.   The Presiding Officer shall then ask for a motion to close the public hearing and no further speakers shall be heard.

16.   Following the close of the public hearing, the Clerk shall record in the Minutes those who spoke at the hearing**.**

17.   Staff will be provided an opportunity to briefly respond to points raised by the speakers.

18.   Members may request clarification of staff respecting matters raised during the public hearing.

Role of Council During Public Hearing

19.   (1)   The role of the Council or Community Council at a public hearing is to listen to the public.

(2)   Members shall not debate nor challenge the comments being offered by the speaker.

(3)   Following a speaker's presentation, Members may ask questions of the speaker, seeking clarification of the points they raised.

(4)   Members shall not enter into dialogue with the public during the Public Hearing.

Voting

20.   Only Members present for the entire staff presentation and public hearing shall be permitted to vote.

21.   Notwithstanding section 20, only Members present during the entire debate following the close of the public hearing, including during any clarification by staff, the developer or Members of the public, shall be permitted to vote respecting

(a)   the adoption or amendment to a Municipal Planning Strategy or Land Use By-law;

(b)   an appeal of a site-plan or variance;

(c)   a registration or de-registration of heritage property; and

(d)   the sale of property at less than market value.

Notice of Motion:	April 28, 2020
Approved:	May 12, 2020

Amendment #1
> Amendment to section 1
> Added sections 3A and 5, and Schedule 1

Notice of Motion:	May 12, 2020
Approved:	May 26, 2020

Amendment #2
> Amendment to sections 2 and 4
> Added sections 3B

Notice of Motion:
Approved:

-ATTACHMENT B – AMENDING ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER-

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 2020-009-ADM
RESPECTING COVID-19

BE IT RESOLVED AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER of the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality under the authority of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* that Administrative Order 2020-009-ADM, the *COVID-19 Administrative Order,* is amended as follows:

1.   Re-lettering subsection (a) of section 2 as subsection (aa) of section 2.

2.   Adding subsection 2(a) before subsection 2(aa) as follows:

        (a)   "alternative public engagement" means public engagement facilitated through one, or a combination of, the following means: written correspondence, the internet, telephone, or meetings held virtually;

3.   Striking out the period and adding the semi-colon and word "; and" after the word "*Order*" in subsection 2(c).

4.   Adding subsection 2(d) after subsection 2(c) as follows:

        (d)   "virtually" means appearing by video, by telephone, or by a combination of video and telephone.

5.   Section 3B is added after section 3A and before section 4 as follows:

3B.   (1)   Notwithstanding any other policy of Council,

        (a)   a public meeting required by a public participation program adopted by Council pursuant to section 219 or 219A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* may be held virtually;

        (b)   a public participation program adopted by Council pursuant to section 219 or 219A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* may be comprised of, wholly or in part, alternative public engagement;

        (c)   a public meeting required by the 1997 Resolution Regarding a Public Participation Program for Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments may be held virtually;

        (d)   a public meeting required for the purpose of gathering feedback on a planning application may be held virtually;

        (e)   public engagement required for the purpose of gathering feedback on a planning application may be comprised of, wholly or in part, alternative public engagement; and

        (f)   a meeting of a Planning Advisory Committee, Joint Planning Advisory Committee, Area Planning Committee or Public Participation Committee may be held virtually.

        (2) If

          (a)   a public meeting under 3B(1)(a), (c) or (d); or

          (b)   a meeting under 3B(1)(f);

is held virtually under subsection 1, such meeting shall be in place of and in full satisfaction of in person meetings.

          (3)   If public engagement under 3B(1)(b) or (e) is held through alternative public engagement, such engagement shall be in place of and in full satisfaction of in person public engagement.

          (4)   Notwithstanding section 4, if a meeting or public engagement has started to be held virtually or through alternative public engagement under subsection 1, but has not been completed before this Administrative Order terminates, such meeting shall continue to be held virtually and such engagement shall continue to be held through alternative public engagement.

          (5)   This section shall not apply to that portion of the public engagement or public meeting that is required by a municipal planning strategy, by-law, or development agreement to be held in person.

6.   Adding the words "Subject to subsection 3B(4)," before the word "This" in Section 4.

7.   Striking out the "T" in the word "This" and replacing it with "t" in Section 4.

8.   Striking out the words "(1)" and "(2) In this Schedule, "virtually" means appearing by video, by telephone, or by a combination of video and telephone" in Section 1 of Schedule 1.

Done and passed this   day of   , 2020.

                                   _____

                                   Mayor

                                   _____

                                   Municipal Clerk

Halifax Regional Municipality – Online Engagement

Shape Your City Halifax

Shape Your City Halifax is the municipality's online engagement website. Projects can have different visibly levels:

Public – anyone can view this project
Paneled – anyone can view the project, but only select panelists (panelists are created via custom groups set up of SYC users) can participate
Protected – only selected group can participate. The group is created by admin of SYC users.

It offers the following features for engagement:

Controlled Environment

Quick Poll

Ask a single question and allow users to select a single answer to that question. Once answered, the results display in place of the poll.

Survey

Ask a series of questions with different formats. surveys can be open to everyone, or open to users with a registered SYC account only. Questions can be manually set to optional or mandatory.
Survey includes Conditional Formatting (i.e. can customize survey experience based on answers to previous questions)

Formats available:

Open Response
- Single Line – answer is a single line; able to restrict answer length
- Essay – answer is an open box, no answer length limit
- Email – answer is an email address
- Number – answer is a number; able to restrict answer length
- File Upload – answer prompts user to upload a file

Scale
- Ranking – answer is options ranked via a drop-down list; can customize the number / content of options to rank, user must rank all options (i.e. if there are 10 options, they will be prompted to rank all 10)
- Likert – answer is options compared on the same scale. Can be used to gauge priorities, importance, or sentiment.
- Emoji – answer is one of three or five emojis. Can be used to gauge sentiment

Choice
- Dropdown – answer is selected from a drop-down list. Only one answer can be selected
- Radio – answer is a clicked button beside an option. Only one answer can be selected
- Checkbox – answer is a clicked checkbox beside an option. Many answers can be selected
- Postal Code – answer is a postal code. Search function fills in valid postal code
- Date – answer is a date

E-blast Communication

Shape Your City Halifax is linked to Campaign Monitor, an email communication platform. Users that register for the platform are added to our database. Can send customized email communication to approx. 7,000 users.

Halifax Regional Municipality – Online Engagement

SMS Messaging*
New feature, allows the admin to send short text messages via SMS to phone numbers in a specified area. Can be used to link to a survey or longer form engagement, or could be used to request an answer to a single, short question.
*The municipality has not yet activated this feature. We would need to investigate pricing before moving forward.

Mixed Environment

Q&A
Users submit questions about the project. On the backend, admin can review and choose to answer, answer privately, archive, or delete a question. The question, once publicly answered, will be displayed to all users.

Stories
Admin creates a topic and users submit long-form text stories as a response. Other users can comment on Stories that have been submitted. Bang the Table offers optional moderation and can reject stories that are not appropriate.

Open Environment

Forum
Admin creates a space for open discussion by posing a question or series of questions. Users reply in the form of comments, creating a series of threads. The forum is formatted to support one question / forum. If another question was to be asked, it would start a new forum.
Bang the Table offers optional moderation support and can hide comments that are not appropriate.

Ideas
An online "post-it" tool. Used for brainstorming or ideation. Users can submit their solutions to a question. Other users can "favourite" or add comments to each Idea posted. Bang the Table offers optional moderation support.

Places
An interactive mapping tool. Admin creates a map (can specify specific area, and can layer additional maps on top if required) and customized pins. Users can drop pins within the map area and leave comments. Also an option to ask survey questions within the Places tool.

Social Media
The municipality utilizes several social media platforms to communicate with residents. Below are listed the social media platforms with existing accounts, and some features of note:

Facebook
Either via hfxgov or hfxplanning. Paid / unpaid options for posts. Users can reply publicly by commenting on all posts. Posts can include text, video, and / or an image.
Facebook Live stream allows for live broadcast of video to followers. Followers can comment on video as it happens.

Twitter
Either via hfxgov or hfxplanning. Paid / unpaid options for Tweets. Short, 280-character communications. Users can reply publicly to all tweets.
Twitter Live options via Periscope allows for live broadcast of video to followers. Followers can comment on video as it happens.
Simple polling feature – poll with four options available within tool.

Halifax Regional Municipality – Online Engagement

Instagram
Via hfxmoments
Paid / unpaid options for Posts and Instagram Stories. Posts must include an image or a video (max :60 seconds long). Longer videos can be uploaded to Instagram via IGTV. Users can comment publicly on all posts.

Instagram Stories – small snippets of content available for only 24 hours. Includes poll, question and answer, quiz, and live video features for interaction.

Youtube
Via HRMNovaScotia
Paid / unpaid options for video promotion. Platform for video upload. Videos on Youtube channel can be embedded on Halifax.ca or Shape Your City Halifax websites. Youtube has live option; video is stored on channel after live broadcast is complete.

LinkedIn
Via Halifax Regional Municipality
Paid / unpaid options for post promotion. Targeted specifically to professionals / businesses.

Best Practices for Accessible Online Engagement

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

May 2020

HALIFAX

Table of Contents

Introduction

As society rapidly changes and digital communications become more common, there is now an increased focus on engaging with the community using online platforms and tools. While the internet is a fantastic tool for getting information out to as many people as possible, the reality is that some online platforms and engagement methods are better than others regarding accessibility. This document provides a guide of best practices and things to keep in mind when using online tools to ensure that the information presented is as accessible as possible.

HRM is in the process of creating an Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy. Part of drafting this strategy has included examining the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1](#) guidelines at levels A and AA. WCAG aims to create an international standard for web content accessibility to ensure content is accessible for individuals with disabilities (W3C, 2018). WCAG has three levels of accessibility requirements, the most basic of which being Level A and the most advanced being Level AAA. For the purposes of this document, we derive recommendations from Level AA, which encompasses criteria from both Level A and Level AA. Full details about WCAG's accessibility requirements can be found in [Appendix A](#); an analysis of each social media platform's WCAG compliance can be found in [Appendix B](#).

It is important to note that none of the social media platforms that HRM uses (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or LinkedIn) are 100% WCAG-compliant. However, each platform does have a variety of accessibility features and options which HRM can keep in mind when producing content for specific platforms. The goal is to make content as accessible as possible within the limitations of the platform being used.

It's also important to keep in mind that some platforms are more successful in certain areas than others, and therefore using a combination of platforms will ultimately make your content more accessible to a wider variety of people. Some individuals with disabilities may prefer Twitter over YouTube, for example, even

though YouTube has more accessibility features overall. Providing a wider variety of engagement options will also result in HRM engaging a larger audience.

Any questions or comments should be directed to the HRM Accessibility Advisor, [Melissa Myers](#) or to the Managing Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, [Tracey Jones-Grant](#)

Barriers to Online Engagement

When conducting community engagement online, it is important to be aware of the various barriers that individuals may face. It is also important to recognize that there are certain demographics who will be underrepresented due to lack of access to online platforms. This lack of access can be due to several factors, including but not limited to: economic status, educational background, language and/or cultural barriers, and disability.

Economics

An individual's economic status will play a major role in whether they will be able to participate in online engagement since some people simply cannot afford the technology required to do so. Without a computer, tablet, smartphone, or even internet connection, individuals will be unable to access information that can only be found online. Under regular circumstances, these individuals may be able to access these resources through a public library; however, in circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where many businesses including libraries are closed, this is no longer an option. In addition, individuals who live in rural communities of HRM may have difficulty engaging online, due to limited and sometimes unreliable internet access.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is also something to consider when doing online engagement. While social media is becoming more and more prevalent in society, there are still many people who are unfamiliar with these platforms and would need to learn the basics of internet usage that many people take for granted. Even if these

individuals learn about using social media, they would still also need access to the technology required to use these platforms in the first place.

Language

Official HRM communications are primarily published in English with a small French Micro-site to support French Language. There are many languages spoken across HRM, and individuals whose first language is not English may not be able to access all the same information as individuals with English as their first language. For in-person engagements, language barriers are much easier to work around; you can have translators on site and nonverbal visual cues provide context to the information being conveyed. When this in-person element is eliminated it can become more challenging for individuals with language and literacy barriers.

Barriers Faced by Individuals with Disabilities

Many individuals with disabilities face the types of barriers mentioned above in addition to their disabilities, resulting in additional challenges when accessing online engagement. For example, consider two individuals of low economic status, one of whom being an individual with a visual impairment. The latter will not only need to purchase a computer and pay for internet services in order to participate in online engagement, they may also need to purchase screen reader software.

Other individuals with disabilities may be able to access the equipment needed for online engagement but may struggle with the lack of in-person assistance in online engagement. For example, an individual with a learning disability may usually benefit from in-person engagements because there is someone immediately available to answer any questions. This is much more difficult to achieve in online engagement.

Tips for Accessible Online Engagement

The following section provides tips, tricks, and best practices for creating accessible online content. These are general guidelines can, for the most part, be

applied to any platform. For more details on applying these tips to specific platforms, whether they be social media platforms or Shape Your City, please refer to the [Social Media](#) or [Shape Your City](#) sections.

Text

The recommended font styles are Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Helvetica, and Calibri; these font styles are simple and lack unnecessary decoration, making them more legible and easier for individuals with visual impairments to read (Bureau of Web Content Accessibility, 2019). Any text used in presentations should be at least 14-pt font. Additionally, there should be effective colour contrast between the text and the background colour. (W3C, 2018)

More specifically, the colour contrast between the text and background should have a 4.5:1 contrast ratio. In WCAG, colour contrast is represented on a scale from 1:1 (white text on a white background) to 21:1 (black text on a white background). The higher the first number, the better the contrast. (W3C, 2018)

To find out whether your text and background colours contrast effectively, use this website to enter the hex numbers and find out the contrast ratio: https://contrast-ratio.com/. You can also hover your mouse over the circle in between the two colours, and a message will pop up telling you in plain language whether the colour contrast meets WCAG standards. **It is recommended to meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.**

Using plain language will ensure that as many people as possible will be able to read and understand the information being conveyed. Try to avoid using jargon and/or technical terms when possible. The following website provides a checklist to help ensure that your text is easy to read and understand: https://plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/checklist/

Images

Alternative Text/Descriptions

When posting images which include important information for the user, it is recommended to include a description of image's contents in the body of the post. A good rule of thumb when figuring out how to describe an image is to ask yourself: "If I couldn't see this picture, what information would I want or need someone to explain to me?" (American Anthropological Association, 2019.) Here are some examples.

Logo

Although the American Anthropological Association does offer examples of how to describe logos and decorative images, WCAG 2.1 guidelines do not require detailed descriptions of such images as they do not convey necessary information to the audience.

When including this logo, for example, according to WCAG 2.1 you would only need to say that it is "The logo for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion." Below is an example of a more detailed description of the same logo for comparison:

[IMAGE ABOVE: This image depicts the HRM Office of Diversity and Inclusion logo. It is an eight-pointed star with four blue points, one purple point, one yellow point, one red point, and one green point. Each point has three different shades of their respective colour within them. For example, the red point has three different shades of red.]

This lets the user have a general idea of what the image contains, but because it doesn't show any necessary details for the user's understanding of the post, there is no need for an in-depth explanation.

Picture Relaying Information

On the other hand, this image would require a more in-depth description. There are more details in the image that are critical to the user's understanding, including text. Any text that is in an image needs to be rewritten in the body of the post in order to be read by screen readers. A description of this image in the body of a Facebook post would look like this:

[IMAGE ABOVE: This image depicts four students each standing in front of two chalkboards, one saying "Equality" and the other saying "Equity." In front of the chalkboard saying "Equality," each of the four students is a different height with one of them sitting in a wheelchair. Each student is given one box to stand or sit

on as they try to write on the chalkboard. In front of the chalkboard saying "Equity," the tallest student is not given a chair; the second-tallest student is standing on one box; the shortest student is standing on two boxes; and the student using a wheelchair is holding a laptop with the word "Equity" displayed on the screen.]

Colour Contrast

When choosing or creating images to post on social media, or in polls or surveys, keep in mind that any colours in the image should contrast well with the background colour of the webpage. Additionally, ensure that if the image has text in it, that the text colour contrasts well with the background colour (W3C, 2018). For more information about contrasting text and background colours, refer to the Text section.

WCAG outlines three exceptions to this rule regarding colour contrast (W3C, 2018):

- **Large Text:** Large-scale text and images of large-scale text only need a 3:1 contrast ratio
- **Incidental:** Text or images of text that are purely for decoration **or** are part of a picture that contains, that are not visible to anyone, or that are part of a picture that contains significant other visual content, have no contrast requirement.
- **Logotypes:** Text that is part of a logo or brand name has no contrast requirement.

Videos

Closed Captions/Transcriptions

There are several ways to post videos on social media, including by sharing YouTube videos to another platform or by uploading videos directly to the platform itself. Either way, it is essential to have closed captioning and transcripts available for users who may require them.

When creating a video transcript, it is important to remember that in terms of accessibility, a good transcript contains more than just words. The transcript includes everything from the names of the characters to their spoken dialogue, to the physical actions that the characters are doing which the viewer needs to know in order to understand the context of the dialogue.

Here is an example of a transcript that has been made for a specific YouTube video. More specifically, the highlighted areas indicate non-verbal actions. You do not need to highlight these sections in a real transcript; they're just in this transcript for demonstration purposes.

[Autism: National Autistic Society Part 2 (misunderstanding)](#)

(Daniel walks up to the front desk where Samantha is sitting.)

Daniel: Can you tell me how to get to Restoration Unit 3C? I have to report to Geoffrey Fox. Can you tell me how to get to Restoration Unit 3C? have to report to Geoffrey Fox.

Samantha: Come on then, I'll show you.

(Samantha gets up from behind the desk and starts walking away from Daniel while still talking to him. Daniel proceeds to follow her.)

Samantha: This way this place is a maze which, means I have to show people around all the time don't get paid enough.

(As Daniel is following Samantha, the background noise and visual get muffled and all focus is on Samantha.)

Daniel: My name is Daniel Davidson, what's yours? My name is Daniel Davidson.

(Samantha is walking quickly and Daniel is trying to keep up with her, all the while asking for her name. She does not answer his question and continues talking about the building as they walk into the elevator.)

Samantha: We'll just walk through here. I'm sure you've been here before as a visitor, but nothing prepares you for the true size of it. I mean I've been working here about three years and also get lost so I wouldn't worry. It's only your first day so if you find yourself wandering around, you're not exactly sure where you're going, there are phones on every level so you can always buzz reception and I'll let you know where to go, but…

(Daniel notices that Samantha is wearing a name tag on her chest, so he looks down at her chest to try to read the name tag.)

Samantha: Excuse me, what do you think you're doing?

Daniel: Trying to get your name.

Samantha: Yeah sure you were, pervert.

(The elevator door opens and Samantha walks out looking angry, leaving Daniel to stand alone. A caption says "A person with autism may find it hard to understand social etiquette.")

Livestreaming

HRM may want to stream videos live to social media platforms. YouTube and Facebook are the best platforms for livestreaming, and there are several ways to improve accessibility for live videos.

When streaming to YouTube or Facebook, HRM can book CART services and/or ASL interpreters. Below are some more details about CART and ASL, including how to book these services:

CART:
- CART is a closed captioning service which is used in public sessions to make sure that those who are deaf or hard of hearing can still engage with your session

- **Always book several weeks in advance to ensure that you can confirm the services for the session**
- It is important to note that some individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing use CART and not ASL- you should have both
- In order to book CART services, you will need to reach out to your procurement representative - **please follow your specific procurement process as outlined on the intranet**
- Ensure there is an AV technician present who is familiar with CART to trouble shoot any issues which may arise- **there may be a standing offer available to use, please follow your specific procurement process as outlined on the intranet**
- CART is not appropriate if your engagement session is in small groups or pop-ups- it is meant for medium or larger groups which have an audience

ASL Interpreters:
- ASL Interpreters are not booked through procurement, as there is no standing offer. You can contact the **Society for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Nova Scotia** (sdhhns@ns.sympatico.ca) and provide payment by cheque once an invoice is emailed after the fact
- **Always book several weeks in advance to ensure you can confirm the interpreters for your session**
- If your engagement session is more than two hours, you must book two interpreters to ensure they can take breaks

Social Media Platforms

This section outlines each of the five social media platforms that HRM uses: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. We provide some tips and tricks to create accessible posts for each social media platform. More specifically, we examine the aspects of social media posts that **HRM has direct control over** regarding accessibility. For example, Facebook's default font is not a recommended font style nor size but HRM can ensure that any text within photos or videos is an appropriate style and size.

If you look at Appendix A and Appendix B, you will notice that none of these social media platforms are 100% compliant with WCAG 2.1. Some platforms are more successful in specific areas than others, which means it is useful to use a variety of platforms and types of posts in order to reach a wider online audience.

Facebook

Text

When it comes to font in Facebook posts, while you cannot choose the font size or style in the body of the post, you can ensure that any images or videos created by HRM with text in them use the recommended font styles and sizes. Refer to the Text section in "Tips for Accessible Online Engagement."

Images

Alternative text and descriptions for images can be placed at the end of the body of the Facebook post. This ensures that the primary message of the post isn't accidentally buried by image descriptions and ensures that individuals with visual impairments are receiving the information in the intended order, with the main portion of the post followed by the image.

Videos

Closed captioning can be added to videos uploaded directly to Facebook in one of two ways. You can either edit the subtitles directly into the video file before uploading, or you can add captions using Facebook's closed captioning feature. Here is a tutorial from Facebook on how to use this feature: https://www.facebook.com/help/261764017354370

Once your captions are ready, it's important to also compile the captions together in one transcript, which can then be copied and pasted into the comments on a Facebook video. For more details on creating video transcripts, refer to Tips for Accessible Online Engagement.

Livestreaming

Livestreams can be accessed on Facebook in two different ways: you can either stream on YouTube and share a link to Facebook, or stream directly from Facebook. Therefore, any HRM broadcasts being streamed on YouTube should be shared on HRM's Facebook page as well in order to reach a wider audience. As with any official HRM broadcast, whenever you are livestreaming on Facebook, it is important to have CART services and ASL interpreters available. [For more information on CART and ASL, refer to Tips for Accessible Online Engagement.](#)

Twitter

Text

Like Facebook, Twitter users cannot choose the font style or size that their Tweets are written in. However, you can ensure that any images or videos created by HRM with text in them use the recommended font styles and sizes. [Refer to the Tips for Accessible Online Engagement section for more information.](#)

Images

Alternative text and image descriptions are recommended on all social media platforms but doing so on Twitter is more challenging due to the platform's 280-character limit. An alternative method would be to write the image description in a Word document and upload that to a third-party site, and then post a link to the image description in a reply to the Tweet with a clear indication of what the link contains.

Videos

Videos work similarly on Twitter as on Facebook; you can either share YouTube videos on Twitter or upload a video directly to Twitter. An important distinction to make is that **videos uploaded directly to Twitter can only be a maximum of 2 minutes and 20 seconds long**, whereas YouTube videos of any length can be shared on Twitter.

If you choose to upload a short video directly to Twitter, ensure that the video will include closed captions either by editing them into the video file or by uploading

an SRT file with the video file on Twitter. For instructions on how to do this, refer to this resource: https://www.3playmedia.com/solutions/how-it-works/how-to-guides/twitter-captions-and-subtitles/

Whatever method you choose for sharing a video, having a transcript available is important. To do this on Twitter, follow the same process as you would to share an image description: create the transcript in a Word document, upload it to a third-party site, and then post the link in a reply to the Tweet.

Livestreaming

Twitter does not have a built-in livestreaming feature. You can, however, share a link to a YouTube livestream. Ensure that the livestream includes CART and ASL interpreters.

Instagram

Text

With Instagram, as with the aforementioned social media platforms, you cannot adjust the font of the image caption or comments sections. However, when adding text to Instagram Stories, you have five font options: Neon, Typewriter, Strong, Modern, and Bold. None of these font styles are highly recommended in terms of accessibility, but a general rule of thumb is that simple fonts with minimal decorative elements are more accessible. Neon, for example, is a highly decorative font style and would not be recommended for accessibility, whereas Modern may be more suitable as it is a more simplistic style.

Instagram Stories also allow you to adjust font size, but not in the same way as a word processing software where you choose a size number like 14-pt font. Instead, you use your fingers to pinch or expand the text to be whatever size you would like. While there is no objective way to determine the font size and how accessible it is using this method, generally speaking, the larger the font is the easier it will be to read. Err on the side of slightly larger text whenever possible.

Images

Instagram has a built-in alternative text feature, which can be found in the New Post creation page under Advanced Settings (In Sight Full Life, 2019). You can also write a longer description of the image in the caption of the post.

Videos

YouTube videos cannot be shared to Instagram, and videos uploaded directly to Instagram can only be up to 60 seconds long. Instagram does not have a built-in closed captioning feature, so depending on the video type there are two different ways to include closed captioning. If the video is part of a regular Instagram post, you can edit closed captioning directly into the video file before uploading it to Instagram. If the video is in an Instagram Story, you can add closed captioning manually to the story immediately before posting by using the Text editing feature in Instagram Stories. When using method, choose one of the more simplistic font styles as mentioned above.

Livestreaming

As with regular videos, Instagram does not allow for livestreams to be shared from YouTube, and so any livestreaming on Instagram needs to be done directly through the Instagram app. There are certain limitations in Instagram livestreams, particularly that they can only be up to 60 minutes long and can be only be filmed from a mobile device in a vertical orientation. This makes it significantly more difficult to include CART and ASL interpreters in Instagram livestreams, therefore this method of livestreaming should generally be avoided in terms of accessibility.

YouTube

Text

YouTube has a default font that cannot be changed regarding video titles, descriptions, and comments. That said, when adding any text to the video itself (such as graphics), keep accessible font styles and sizes in mind, including colour contrast with the video's background. Refer to the Tips for Accessible Online Engagement section to learn more about accessible fonts.

Images

Images cannot be shared on YouTube.

Videos

As a video sharing platform, it is crucial that YouTube videos be as accessible as possible. Fortunately, YouTube supports accessibility features such as closed captioning and transcripts.

In regard to closed captioning, YouTube provides two options: you can either allow YouTube to auto-generate captions for your video, or manually add them yourself. The latter is generally the best option because it ensures that the captions are 100% accurate in terms of spelling, grammar, and word choice. To learn how to add your own closed captions to YouTube videos, click here: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en

Whichever method you choose to include closed captions, YouTube will create a transcript based on the captions. However, this method is designed in such a way that transcripts will only include spoken word and dialogue, not visual details such as body language or other nonverbal cues that are important for understanding the video. In that case, the best option would be to create your own video transcript from scratch, combining both spoken word and any necessary visual details, and uploading that Word document to a third-party site and posting the link in the video description. Refer to the Tips for Accessible Online Engagement section for more details on creating a high-quality video transcript.

If a video is pre-recorded, HRM can also book an ASL interpreter to interpret the video's dialogue and include the footage of the interpreter in a corner of the screen. For more details on booking ASL interpreters, refer to the Tips for Accessible Online Engagement section.

Livestreaming

YouTube is the primary platform that HRM uses for livestreaming, therefore it is essential that any YouTube livestream from HRM has CART services and ASL

interpreters available in order to make them accessible. [For details on booking CART and ASL interpreters, refer to the Tips for Accessible Online Engagement section.](#)

LinkedIn

Text

LinkedIn's default font for text posts and comments cannot be changed, so the most that HRM can to do ensure that text is accessible is to ensure that any text included in photos or videos are of an appropriate font size and style. [Refer to the Tips for Accessible Online Engagement section for more information on accessible fonts.](#)

Images

Any images posted on LinkedIn should include alternative text and longer text descriptions. These can be included in the body of the text post, at the end of the post, to ensure that the order in which the content is presented remains consistent.

Videos

When uploading videos directly to LinkedIn, it is possible to add closed captioning, but it requires an associated SRT (SubRip Subtitle) file in order to do so. A tutorial for adding closed captioning to LinkedIn videos can be found here: https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/93997/adding-closed-captioning-to-videos-on-linkedin?lang=en

A transcription for the LinkedIn video can be shared in a comment on the post by uploading the Word document to a third-party site and then providing a link.

Livestreaming

LinkedIn does not have a livestreaming feature.

Shape Your City

HRM uses Shape Your City for various forms of online engagement including polls, surveys, and eblast communications to individuals who sign up for these emails. In looking at the WCAG guidelines and applying these principles to polls, surveys, and eblast communications sent through Shape Your City, here are some ideas to keep in mind to make content more accessible.

If Shape Your City content is built using a markup language like HTML, this website is a good resource for ensuring content is friendly to screen readers: https://webaim.org/techniques/forms/controls

General Tips

When creating Shape Your City content, it is important to recognize that people from a variety of backgrounds will be reading the content, including various educational and cultural backgrounds. Using plain language will ensure that as many people as possible will be able to read and understand the information being conveyed. Try to avoid using jargon and/or technical terms when possible. This website provides a checklist to help ensure that your text is easy to read and understand: https://plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/checklist/

HRM occasionally uses an interactive map tool for Shape Your City online engagement. The map can be used to pinpoint specific areas of HRM on a map and provide written feedback to the selected area. These maps can be difficult to navigate for users with disabilities, so having an alternative method of providing the same feedback would be helpful. For example, you can create an open response survey where users can identify the street or neighbourhood being addressed and then write out their feedback in a text box.

Surveys

HRM surveys include a series of questions in different formats, including open response questions, scale questions, and choice questions. The following are things to keep in mind when developing a survey:

Keyboard Navigation

Not everybody is able to use a mouse or trackpad therefore all Shape Your City content should be fully accessible using only a keyboard. Users should be able to navigate and complete any poll or survey using only a keyboard (for example, by being able to use the Tab key to navigate between items and sections of the webpage).

File Uploads

One option when creating a survey is to prompt users to upload a file from their computer. When including a file upload, it is important to ensure that the entire process of uploading a file is screen reader-friendly and accessible by keyboard. This includes the process of clicking the "Upload File" button as well as navigating the user's file folder.

Emoji Scale

One of the question formats available is an emoji scale, where users select between a variety of emojis that reflects their feeling about a topic. Emojis are not screen reader-friendly and, therefore, should generally be avoided when possible. Instead, consider creating a Likert scale with responses ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree."

Selecting a Date

One of the question formats available is a date selection tool. If you are using this tool in an HRM poll or survey, test the date selection tool ahead of time to ensure that it is navigable using only a keyboard.

eBlast Communications

Shape Your City uses Campaign Monitor to create and send mass email communications to users. Campaign Monitor, in collaboration with Vision Australia, created a guide to accessible email campaigns, including best practices and a checklist to ensure that email communications are accessible. This guide

can be found here:
https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/accessibility/

Below is the checklist created by Campaign Monitor and Vision Australia to ensure accessibility in email campaigns (Campaign Monitor, 2020).

Email Content

- ☐ Subject line is concise and descriptive
- ☐ Tables are optimized to preserve logical reading order
- ☐ Heading elements used
- ☐ Text colour contrast is sufficient
- ☐ Images have suitable alt attributes
- ☐ Headings summarize content that follows
- ☐ Link text is meaningful (not "read more" or "click here")
- ☐ Images have meaningful alt attributes

Desktop/Webmail

- ☐ Email content is zoomable to 200% without losing content visibility or function
- ☐ Content is fully keyboard accessible and demonstrates visual focus
- ☐ Headings, lists and structural HTML markup is retained
- ☐ Reading order is logical and as intended

Mobile

- ☐ Email content can be resized using a pinch zoom gesture
- ☐ All content can be read using a device screen reader (e.g. VoiceOver)

Conclusion

As the need for online engagement increases, it will be crucial for HRM to ensure that any social media posts, online polls, surveys and emails are as accessible as possible. While there is only so much that HRM can control due to the limitations

of individual platforms, there are ways that we can create content that is accessible to a wide variety of individuals using the tools at our disposal. By applying the best practices outlined in this document to any online engagement, we can communicate HRM messages to a broader audience and help everyone's voices be heard.

References

American Anthropological Association. (2019). *Guidelines for Creating Image Descriptions.* American Anthropological Association. https://www.americananthro.org/ImageDescriptions?navItemNumber=25126

Bureau of Internet Accessibility (2017, May 20). *Best Fonts to Use for Website Accessibility.* Bureau of Internet Accessibility. https://www.boia.org/blog/best-fonts-to-use-for-website-accessibility

Campaign Monitor. (2020). *Accessibility and Email Campaigns.* Campaign Monitor. https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/accessibility/

In Sight: Full Life. (2019). *Creating an Accessible Instagram Account.* In Sight: Full Life. https://www.insightfulllife.com/accessible-instagram/

W3C. (2018, June 5.) *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.* W3.org. https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/

Resources

Adding Closed Captioning to Videos on LinkedIn:
https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/93997/adding-closed-captioning-to-videos-on-linkedin?lang=en

Add your own subtitles and closed captions (YouTube tutorial):
https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en

Campaign Monitor: Accessibility and Email Campaigns.
https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/accessibility/

Checklist for Plain Language:
https://plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/checklist/

Contrast Ratio: https://contrast-ratio.com/

How to Add Captions and Subtitles to Twitter Videos:
https://www.3playmedia.com/solutions/how-it-works/how-to-guides/twitter-captions-and-subtitles/

WebAIM: Creating Accessible Forms.
https://webaim.org/techniques/forms/controls

Appendix A: Social Media WCAG 2.1 Compliance Table

The table includes a variety of symbols which indicate each platform's compliance with each criteria, as described below:

✓ = HRM is able to design content that meets this requirement on this platform

X = This platform does not fulfill this requirement, and the lack of this accessibility feature may impact the experience of some users

N/A = This accessibility feature does not apply to this platform or the type of online engagement that HRM creates

*. = This requirement is the responsibility of the individual platform to fulfill, and HRM cannot design content in such a way to fulfill the requirement.

~ = This requirement can be fulfilled in some instances, but not others, on a specific platform.

Level A							
Principle 1: Perceivable							
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**
1.1.1 – Text Alternatives	Non-Text Content	**Controls, Input:** If non-text content is a control or accepts user input, then it has a name that describes its purpose.	X*	X*	X*	✓*	X*
		Time-Based Media: If non-text content is time-based media, then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.	✓*	✓	✓*	✓*	✓
		Test: If non-text content is a test or exercise that would be invalid if presented in text, then text alternatives at least provide	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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		descriptive identification of the non-text content.					
		Sensory: If non-text content is primarily intended to create a specific sensory experience, then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
		CAPTCHA: If the purpose of non-text content is to confirm that content is being accessed by a person rather than a computer, then text alternatives that identify and describe the purpose of the non-text content are provided, and alternative forms of CAPTCHA using output modes for different types of sensory perception are provided to accommodate different disabilities.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		Decoration, Formatting, Invisible: If non-text content is pure					

		decoration, is used only for visual formatting, or is not presented to users, then it is implemented in a way that it can be ignored by assistive technology.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
		Prerecorded Audio-only: An alternative for time-based media is provided that presents equivalent information for prerecorded audio-only content.	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			3/7 43%	3/7 %	3/7 43%	5/7 71%	3/7 43%

Comments

Time-Based Media: When uploading videos to Facebook, HRM can include a link to a PDF containing a written transcription of the video in the comments of the Facebook post. Since Twitter does not support file attachments in replies to Tweets, HRM can instead upload a Word document of the written transcription to the Internet and post that link as a reply to the Tweet. In regards to LinkedIn, users can include closed captioning on videos uploaded to LinkedIn, but it requires an associated SRT (SubRip Subtitle) file in order to do so.

Sensory: When uploading images or videos to Facebook that are intended to create a specific sensory experience, HRM can include a descriptive caption on the post to identify and explain the content within the post. This can be done on Twitter as well, though the description would be much shorter. Alt text can be added to Instagram images by tapping "Advanced Settings" in the section where you would write the caption. In terms of YouTube, HRM has the option to create and upload their own video transcriptions to YouTube with full details, including visual details. While YouTube does have an automated transcription feature, it is not always accurate and often misses visual details.

Decoration, Formatting, Invisible*: The asterisk in this title indicates that this functionality is automatically provided by Facebook and Twitter, and HRM does not need to adapt their posts to meet this requirement.

Prerecorded Audio-Only: When uploading an audio-only video to YouTube, HRM can include a transcription in the video.

	Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded)	**Prerecorded Video-only:** Either an alternative for time-based media or an audio track is provided that presents equivalent information for prerecorded video-only content.	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

1.1.2 – Time-Based Media	Captions (Prerecorded)	Captions are provided for all prerecorded audio content in synchronized media, except when the media is a media alternative for text and is clearly labeled as such.	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Audio Description or Media Alternative (prerecorded)	An alternative for time-based media or audio description of the prerecorded video content is provided for synchronized media, except when the media is a media alternative for text and is clearly labeled as such.	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**3/3** **100%**	**3/3** **100%**	**3/3** **100%**	**3/3** **100%**	**3/3** **100%**
Comments							

Prerecorded Video-Only: When uploading videos to Facebook, HRM can include downloadable version of a written transcription of the video in the comments of the Facebook post. Since Twitter does not support file attachments in replies to Tweets, HRM can instead upload a PDF of the written transcription to the Internet

and post that link as a reply to the Tweet. Closed captioning and transcriptions can be added directly to videos for YouTube.

Captions: There are three ways that HRM can ensure that videos uploaded to Facebook include closed captioning:

1. Posting a YouTube video with closed captioning to Facebook.
2. Creating an original video and including closed captioning directly into the video.
3. Generate automated captions using Facebook's closed captioning feature.

Videos cannot be uploaded directly to Twitter, so HRM can post YouTube links to Twitter and ensure that the videos they upload include closed captioning.

In regards to Instagram, users cannot share YouTube videos to Instagram and instead need to upload an original video, up to 60 seconds in length, to Instagram. These videos need to have closed captioning already included as Instagram does not provide this feature.

When preparing videos to upload to YouTube, HRM can ensure that closed captioning and transcriptions are prepared. Ensure that the transcription includes important visual details.

In regards to LinkedIn, users can include closed captioning on videos uploaded to LinkedIn, but it requires an associated SRT (SubRip Subtitle) file in order to do so.

Audio Description: HRM can fulfill this requirement by recording and including an audio description in original videos created by HRM, and uploading these videos to YouTube so that they can be shared on Twitter.

1.3 - Adaptable	Info and Relationships	Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text.	✔	X*	X*	✔	✔
	Meaningful Sequence	When the sequence in which content is presented affects its meaning, a correct reading sequence can be programmatically determined.	✔*	✔*	X*	✔*	✔*
	Sensory Characteristics	Instructions provided for understanding and operating content do not rely solely on sensory characteristics of components such as shape, color, size, visual location, orientation, or sound.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**2/3** **66%**	**1/3** **33%**	**0/3** **0%**	**2/3** **66%**	**2/3** **66%**

1.4 - Distinguishable	Use of Color	Color is not used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Audio Control	If any audio on a Web page plays automatically for more than 3 seconds, either a mechanism is available to pause or stop the audio, or a mechanism is available to control audio volume independently from the overall system volume level.	✓	✓	~*	✓*	✓*
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**1.5/2** **75%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**
Comments							
Info and Relationships: When uploading photos to Facebook, HRM can include a detailed description of the contents of the photo in the caption. This would be similar to alt text in a Word document.							

Use of Color: When creating images or graphics to be uploaded to Facebook, ensure that there are a variety of distinguishing factors between different pieces of information in the graphic, not just colour.

Audio Control: On Instagram stories, there is no way to pause or stop the audio without swiping away from the story entirely. However, you are able to mute videos on your Instagram feed.

		Principle 2: Operable					
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**
	Keyboard	All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes, except where the underlying function requires input that depends on the path of the user's movement and not just the endpoints.	✓*	✓*	X*	✓*	✓*
		If keyboard focus can be moved to a component of the page using a keyboard					

2.1 – Keyboard Accessible	No Keyboard Trap	interface, then focus can be moved away from that component using only a keyboard interface, and, if it requires more than unmodified arrow or tab keys or other standard exit methods, the user is advised of the method for moving focus away.	✓*	✓*	~*	✓*	✓*
	Character Key Shortcuts	If a keyboard shortcut is implemented in content using only letter (including upper- and lower-case letters), punctuation, number, or symbol characters, then at least one of the following is true: **Turn off:** A mechanism is available to turn the shortcut off; **Remap:** A mechanism is available to remap the shortcut to use one or more non-printable keyboard characters (e.g. Ctrl, Alt, etc); **Active only on focus**: The keyboard shortcut for a user interface component is only active when that component has focus.	X*	X*	X*	✓*	N/A

Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):	2/3	2/3	0.5/3	3/3	2/3
	66%	66%	17%	100%	66%

Comments

No Keyboard Trap: The browser version of Instagram is not entirely accessible by keyboard. You are able to access your Instagram stories and feed, but not the search bar, Explore page, your profile, or suggestions for accounts to follow, among other areas. The areas of Instagram which are keyboard-accessible (Stories and feed) do fulfill this requirement.

Character Key Shortcuts: Instagram does not provide built-in keyboard shortcuts, however individuals can install various browser extensions and other third-party tools to create their own keyboard shortcuts.

2.2 – Enough Time	Timing Adjustable	For each time limit that is set by the content, at least one of the following is true: **Turn off:** The user is allowed to turn off the time limit before encountering it; or **Adjust:** The user is allowed to adjust the time limit before encountering it over a wide range that is at least ten times the length of the default setting; or **Extend:** The user is warned before time expires and given at least 20 seconds to	N/A	N/A	X*	N/A	N/A

		extend the time limit with a simple action (for example, "press the space bar"), and the user is allowed to extend the time limit at least ten times; or **Real-time Exception:** The time limit is a required part of a real-time event (for example, an auction), and no alternative to the time limit is possible; or **Essential Exception:** The time limit is essential and extending it would invalidate the activity; or **20 Hour Exception:** The time limit is longer than 20 hours.					
	Pause, Stop, Hide	For moving, blinking, scrolling, or auto-updating information, all of the following are true: **Moving, blinking, scrolling:** For any moving, blinking or scrolling information that (1) starts automatically, (2) lasts more than five seconds, and (3) is presented in parallel with other content, there is a mechanism for the					

			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		user to pause, stop, or hide it unless the movement, blinking, or scrolling is part of an activity where it is essential; and **Auto-updating:** For any auto-updating information that (1) starts automatically and (2) is presented in parallel with other content, there is a mechanism for the user to pause, stop, or hide it or to control the frequency of the update unless the auto-updating is part of an activity where it is essential.					
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.3 – Seizures and Physical Reactions	Three Flashes or Below Threshold	Web pages do not contain anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period, or the flash is below the general flash and red flash thresholds.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>2.4 – Navigable</u>	Bypass Blocks	A mechanism is available to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple Web pages.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Page Titled	Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose.	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓*	✓*
	Focus Order	If a Web page can be navigated sequentially and the navigation sequences affect meaning or operation, focusable components receive focus in an order that preserves meaning and operability.	N/A	N/A	X*	N/A	N/A
	Link Purpose (In Context)	The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its programmatically determined link context, except where the purpose of the link would be ambiguous to users in general.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			1/4 25%	1/4 25%	1/4 25%	2/4 50%	2/4 50%
Comments							
Link Purpose (In Context): When creating social media posts which will include a link, HRM can write a description of the content and purpose of each link. For example, if a post is directing users to an HRM survey, the caption can read, "Click here to access the survey."							
2.5 – Input Modalities	Pointer Gestures	All functionality that uses multipoint or path-based gestures for operation can be operated with a single pointer without a path-based gesture, unless a multipoint or path-based gesture is essential.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		For functionality that can be operated using a single pointer, at least one of the following is true:					

2.5 – Input Modalities	Pointer Cancellation	**No Down-Event:** The down-event of the pointer is not used to execute any part of the function; **Abort or Undo:** Completion of the function is on the up-event, and a mechanism is available to abort the function before completion or to undo the function after completion; **Up Reversal:** The up-event reverses any outcome of the preceding down-event; **Essential:** Completing the function on the down-event is essential.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
	Label in Name	For user interface components with labels that include text or images of text, the name contains the text that is presented visually.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		Functionality that can be operated by device motion or user motion can also be operated by user interface components and					

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Guideline	Success Criterion	Description	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn
Motion Actuation		responding to the motion can be disabled to prevent accidental actuation, except when: **Supported Interface:** The motion is used to operate functionality through an accessibility supported interface; **Essential:** The motion is essential for the function and doing so would invalidate the activity.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**1/4** **25%**	**1/4** **25%**	**1/4** **25%**	**1/4** **25%**	**1/4** **25%**

Principle 3 - Understandable							
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**

HALIFAX

3.1 - Readable	Language of Page	The default human language of each Web page can be programmatically determined.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**
3.2 – Predictable	On Focus	When any user interface component receives focus, it does not initiate a change of context.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
	On Input	Changing the setting of any user interface component does not automatically cause a change of context unless the user has been advised of the behavior before using the component.	N/A	N/A	X*	N/A	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**1/2** **50%**	**1/2** **50%**	**1/2** **50%**	**1/2** **50%**	**1/2** **50%**
3.3 – Input Assistance	Error Identification	If an input error is automatically detected, the item that is in error is identified and the error is described to the user in text.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*

			Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn
Labels or Instructions		Labels or instructions are provided when content requires user input.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**

Comments

Labels or Instructions: When directing users to a link in a social media post, HRM can include labels and instructions in the caption of the Facebook post.

Principle 4 – Robust							
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**
	Parsing	In content implemented using markup languages, elements have complete start and end tags, elements are nested according to their specifications, elements do not contain	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**

4.1 – Compatible		duplicate attributes, and any IDs are unique, except where the specifications allow these features.					
	Name, Role, Value	For all user interface components (including but not limited to: form elements, links and components generated by scripts), the name and role can be programmatically determined; states, properties, and values that can be set by the user can be programmatically set; and notification of changes to these items is available to user agents, including assistive technologies.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comments							
The guidelines within Principle 4 are in regards to content using markup languages which are created by the developers of individual social media platforms. HRM would not be using markup languages to create social media content.							

		Level AA					
		Principle 1: Perceivable					
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**
1.2 – Time-based Media	Captions (Live)	Captions are provided for all live audio content in synchronized media.	✓	✓	X*	✓	N/A
	Audio Description (Pre-recorded)	Audio description is provided for all prerecorded video content in synchronized media.	✓	✓	X*	✓	✓
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**0/2** **0%**	**2/2** **100%**	**1/2** **50%**
		Comments					

Captions (Live): When streaming original videos on YouTube or Facebook Live, HRM can provide closed captioning via CART as well as ASL interpretation.

Audio Description (Pre-recorded): HRM can fulfill this requirement by recording and including an audio description in original videos created by HRM.

1.3 - Adaptable	Orientation	Content does not restrict its view and operation to a single display orientation, such as portrait or landscape, unless a specific display orientation is essential.	✓*	X*	X*	✓	X*
	Identify Input Purpose	The purpose of each input field collecting information about the user can be programmatically determined when: • The input field serves a purpose identified in the Input Purposes for User Interface Components section; and • The content is implemented using technologies with support for identifying the expected meaning for form input data.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			1/2 50%	0/2 0%	0/2 0%	1/2 50%	0/2 0%

1.4 – Distinguishable	Contrast	The visual presentation of text and images of text has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1, except for the following: **Large Text:** Large-scale text and images of large-scale text have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1; **Incidental:** Text or images of text that are part of an inactive user interface component, that are pure decoration, that are not visible to anyone, or that are part of a picture that contains significant other visual content, have no contrast requirement. **Logotypes:** Text that is part of a logo or brand name has no contrast requirement.	✓*	✓*	~*	✓*	✓*
	Resize Text	Except for captions and images of text, text can be resized without assistive technology up to 200 percent without loss of content or functionality.	✓	X*	X*	✓*	✓*

	Images of Text	If the technologies being used can achieve the visual presentation, text is used to convey information rather than images of text except for the following: **Customizable**: The image of text can be visually customized to the user's requirements; **Essential:** A particular presentation of text is essential to the information being conveyed.	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
1.4 – <u>Distinguishable</u>	Reflow	Content can be presented without loss of information or functionality, and without requiring scrolling in two dimensions for: • Vertical scrolling content at a width equivalent to 320 CSS pixels; • Horizontal scrolling content at a height equivalent to 256 CSS pixels.	X*	X*	X*	✓*	✓*

1.4 – <u>Distinguishable</u>							
		Except for parts of the content which require two-dimensional layout for usage or meaning.					
	Non-text contrast	The visual presentation of the following have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1 against adjacent color(s): **User Interface Components:** Visual information required to identify user interface components and states, except for inactive components or where the appearance of the component is determined by the user agent and not modified by the author;	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
		Graphical Objects: Parts of graphics required to understand the content, except when a particular presentation of graphics is essential to the information being conveyed.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

| 1.4 – Distinguishable | Text Spacing | In content implemented using markup languages that support the following text style properties, no loss of content or functionality occurs by setting all of the following and by changing no other style property:

• Line height (line spacing) to at least 1.5 times the font size;
• Spacing following paragraphs to at least 2 times the font size;
• Letter spacing (tracking) to at least 0.12 times the font size;
• Word spacing to at least 0.16 times the font size.

Exception: Human languages and scripts that do not make use of one or more of these text style properties in written text can conform using only the | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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1.4 - Distinguishable	Content on Hover or Focus	properties that exist for that combination of language and script.					
		Where receiving and then removing pointer hover or keyboard focus triggers additional content to become visible and then hidden, the following are true: **Dismissable:** A mechanism is available to dismiss the additional content without moving pointer hover or keyboard focus, unless the additional content communicates an input error or does not obscure or replace other content; **Hoverable:** If pointer hover can trigger the additional content, then the pointer can be moved over the additional content without the additional content disappearing; **Persistent:** The additional content remains visible until the hover or focus	X*	N/A	N/A	X*	N/A

		trigger is removed, the user dismisses it, or its information is no longer valid. Exception: The visual presentation of the additional content is controlled by the user agent and is not modified by the author.					
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**4/7** **57%**	**2/7** **28%**	**2.5/7** **36%**	**5/7** **71%**	**5/7** **71%**

<div align="center">

Comments

</div>

Non-Text Contrast: In the case of user interface components, this is the responsibility of the Facebook and Twitter platforms to fulfill. In terms of graphical objects, however, HRM can design graphics in images to ensure that they meet the required 3:1 contrast ratio.

The colour contrast between the text and background should have a 4.5:1 contrast ratio. In WCAG, colour contrast is represented on a scale from 1:1 (white text on a white background) to 21:1 (black text on a white background). The higher the first number, the better the contrast.

To find out whether your text and background colours contrast effectively, use this website to enter the hex numbers and find out the contrast ratio: https://contrast-ratio.com/. You can also hover your mouse over the circle in between the two colours, and a message will pop up telling you in plain language whether or not the colour contrast meets WCAG standards. **It is recommended to meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.**

		Principle 2 – Operable						
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**
2.4 – Navigable	Multiple Ways	More than one way is available to locate a Web page within a set of Web pages except where the Web Page is the result of, or a step in, a process.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Headings and Labels	Headings and labels describe topic or purpose.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Focus Visible	Any keyboard operable user interface has a mode of operation where the keyboard focus indicator is visible.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**1/3** **33%**	**1/3** **33%**	**1/3** **33%**	**1/3** **33%**	**1/3** **33%**

		Principle 3 - Understandable						
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**	
3.1 - Readable	Language of Parts	The human language of each passage or phrase in the content can be programmatically determined except for proper names, technical terms, words of indeterminate language, and words or phrases that have become part of the vernacular of the immediately surrounding text.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	**1/1** **100%**	
3.2 – Predictable	Consistent Navigation	Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	

3.2 – Predictable		repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.					
	Consistent Identification	Components that have the same functionality within a set of Web pages are identified consistently.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):			**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**	**2/2** **100%**
3.3 – Input Assistance	Error Suggestion	If an input error is automatically detected and suggestions for correction are known, then the suggestions are provided to the user, unless it would jeopardize the security or purpose of the content.	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
	Error Prevention	For Web pages that cause legal commitments or financial transactions for the user to occur, that modify or delete user-controllable data in data storage systems, or that submit user test responses, at least one of the following is true:					

			Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn
(Legal, Financial, Data)	**Reversible:** Submissions are reversible. **Checked**: Data entered by the user is checked for input errors and the user is provided an opportunity to correct them. **Confirmed:** A mechanism is available for reviewing, confirming, and correcting information before finalizing the submission.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Requirements Met (this score accounts for requirements which are met with either a checkmark or a combination of checkmark and asterisk):		1/2 50%	1/2 50%	1/2 50%	1/2 50%	1/2 50%

Principle 4 - Robust							
Guideline	**Success Criterion**	**Description**	**Facebook**	**Twitter**	**Instagram**	**YouTube**	**LinkedIn**
4.1 – Compatible	Status Messages	In content implemented using markup languages, status messages can be programmatically determined through role or properties such that they can be					

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		presented to the user by assistive technologies without receiving focus.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Comments

The guidelines within Principle 4 are in regards to content using markup languages which are created by the developers of individual social media platforms. HRM would not be using markup languages to create social media content.

Appendix B: WCAG 2.1 – Social Media Compliance Analysis

Level A, Principle 1: Perceivable

Text Alternatives Guideline: The only platform that passes with a 71% compliance rate is YouTube. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn all have a 43% compliance rate.

Time-Based Media Guideline: On all the chosen social media platforms, HRM can create content that is 100% compliant with the Time-Based Media guideline. Although the platforms themselves don't necessarily meet these requirements, HRM can generate content for each platform in such a way to be compliant.

Adaptable Guideline: Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn all pass with a 66% compliance rate. Twitter is 33% compliant, while Instagram is 0% compliant.

Distinguishable Guideline: All the chosen social media platforms pass. Instagram has a 75% compliance rate while all the others are 100% compliant.

Level A, Principle 2: Operable

Keyboard Accessible Guideline: YouTube is 100% compliant with this guideline. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn all pass with a 66% compliance rate, while Instagram fails with a 17% compliance rate.

Enough Time Guideline: The requirements in this guideline do not apply to the chosen social media platforms, therefore they all score N/A (not applicable).

Seizures and Physical Reactions Guideline: Similarly to the Enough Time Guideline, the requirements in this guideline do not apply to the chosen social media platforms, therefore they all score N/A (not applicable).

Navigable Guideline: YouTube and LinkedIn both pass with a 50% compliance rate for this guideline, while the others fail with a 25% compliance rate.

Input Modalities Guideline: All the social media platforms conform to 25% of the requirements for this guideline; however, the requirements that they do not meet are considered N/A.

Level A, Principle 3: Understandable

Readable Guideline: All platforms are 100% compliant with this guideline.

Predictable Guideline: All platforms are 50% compliant with this guideline. Apart from Instagram (which fails one of the two requirements), the requirement which is not being met is not applicable.

Input Assistance Guideline: All platforms are 100% compliant with this guideline.

Level A, Principle 4: Robust

Compatible Guideline: The requirements in this guideline are not applicable to the social media platforms HRM is using. HRM does not create content using markup languages to post to social media.

Level AA, Principle 1: Perceivable

Time-Based Media Guideline: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube all pass this guideline with a 100% compliance rate, while LinkedIn passes with 50%. Instagram fails with 0%.

Adaptable Guideline: Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn pass this guideline with 50%, while Twitter and Instagram fail with 0%. Out of the two requirements within this guideline, one of them is not applicable to any of the social media platforms used by HRM.

Distinguishable Guideline: Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn pass this guideline; Facebook is 57% compliant while YouTube and LinkedIn are 71% compliant. Twitter is 28% compliant while Instagram is 36% compliant.

Level AA, Principle 2: Operable

Navigable Guideline: Each social media platform only meets one of the three requirements in this guideline, giving them a 33% compliance rate; however, the other two requirements in the guideline are not applicable to these platforms.

Level AA, Principle 3: Understandable

Readable Guideline: All the chosen social media platforms are 100% compliant with this guideline.

Predictable Guideline: All the chosen social media platforms are 100% compliant with this guideline.

Input Assistance Guideline: All the chosen social media platforms meet one out of two requirements in this guideline (50%); however, the requirement that is not met is not applicable as HRM online engagements do not cause legal commitments or financial transactions.

Level AA, Principle 4: Robust

Compatible Guideline: The requirement in this guideline is not applicable to HRM as the content HRM would create for these platforms is not implemented using markup languages.

Halifax Regional Municipality

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
February 18, 1997

TO: Mayor Fitzgerald and Members of Regional Council

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____

K.R. Meech, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed

_____

Dan English, Commissioner of Community Services

DATE: February 11, 1997

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY AMENDMENTS**

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

June 12, 1996, North West Community Council session

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council consider the adoption of the public participation resolution attached as Appendix "A".

BACKGROUND

The Halifax Regional Charter provides that the approval of amendments to all municipal planning strategies within the region rests with Regional Council. The responsibility for land use by-law amendments, rezonings, development agreement approvals, and minor variance application appeals is delegated to Community Councils. Excluding secondary plans within the former City of Halifax, there are currently seventeen(17) municipal planning strategy documents in place covering all areas of HRM.

Under the Planning Act (Section 34), the preparation and amendment of municipal planning strategies requires the adoption of a public participation program, the intent of which is to ensure and identify the means by which the public will be provided an opportunity to have input. This public participation program is intended to be over and above the public hearing process required for the adoption/amendment of municipal planning strategies.

DISCUSSION

Before amalgamation, each of the municipal units had approved its own program of public participation. In all instances, a public information meeting was required prior to a municipal council holding a public hearing to consider a particular matter. In Halifax, Bedford and the County, this meeting was held by a Planning Advisory Committee while in Dartmouth, where there was no PAC, the meeting was held by planning staff. Staff believe that the same general approach should continue with the Regional Municipality.

In addition to requiring that a public meeting be held, each of the pre-amalgamation units also included specific conditions concerning the advertising and/or timing of the meeting. In all cases, a newspaper advertisement of the meeting was required. In Bedford and the County, the advertisement was required at least one week prior to the meeting; Halifax and Dartmouth had no specific timeframe. In Dartmouth, the public meeting had to be held at least five clear days prior to a public hearing to consider the matter while in Halifax the meeting was required within four weeks of the matter having been referred from Council to the PAC. Bedford and the County had no specific requirements concerning the timing of the meeting. Implicitly, however, just as in Halifax, the public meeting was a mandatory step for the PAC to follow in the process of making a recommendation to Council. Staff supports the continuation of this practice.

Implications of Community Councils

Prior to amalgamation, Halifax County Municipality had a similar division of responsibilities between the Municipal Council and the Community Councils as exists in the Region today, i.e., the responsibility for approving plan amendments did not rest with the Community Councils. However, in recognition of the fact that these community councils have an obvious interest and stake in any changes to the municipal planning strategies within their respective jurisdictions, Municipal Council adopted a public participation program which recognized and supported these interests.

In situations where a plan amendment was being considered in an area where a community council functioned, the public participation program required that the Community PAC serving that particular area rather than Municipal Council's own Municipal PAC, would hold a public meeting within the community. In these instances, the Community PAC was considered to be functioning as an area advisory committee to the Municipal PAC.

The Halifax County process required that the recommendation from the Community PAC to Municipal PAC be forwarded via the Community Council. While the Community Council had the ability to question and ask that a Community PAC reconsider a recommendation, it could not overturn or prevent such a recommendation from proceeding to the next level. If there were situations where the Community Council could not agree or accept the recommendation of the Community PAC, it could make its own alternative recommendation.

At the present time, five Community Councils have been approved by Regional Council. There is considerable variation concerning the PAC structure within these community council areas:

1.   There is a new PAC for the entire North West Community Council area.
2.   The Marine Drive, Valley & Canal Community Council will soon appoint a new PAC.
3.   A PAC covers part of the Harbour East Community Council area.
4.   The Halifax Peninsula Community Council has appointed a PAC.
5.   The Chebucto Community Council has decided not to have a PAC.

Proposed Public Participation Program

In recommending a public participation program concerning plan amendments, staff suggest that a distinction be made between amendments which are considered to be regional in nature and those which are more local. Public participation concerning regional issues should be handled directly by Regional Council while for amendment proposals of a more local nature, staff believe that public participation should be channelled through the various community councils and their PACs.

One of the significant benefits of amalgamation is the ability to consider region wide policies and regulations. The implementation of policies affecting all or large parts of HRM will involve amending all or several municipal planning strategies. Regional issues do not, however, necessarily involve more than one planning strategy. For example, issues related to the Halifax downtown area or to the International Airport are arguably more regional than local in nature despite being addressed in only one municipal planning strategy. Given the range and diversity of regional planning issues which might arise, specific public participation programs should be approved on a case-by-case basis. This report will, therefore, focus upon a public participation program for local plan amendment proposals.

The minimum requirement for a public participation program should include a duly advertised public meeting which provides an opportunity for all interested persons to express their opinions. Although there was variation among the pre-amalgamation units, it is considered a benefit to having a staff report prepared and available prior to a public meeting. Such a report would provide an explanation of the issue involved and options by which it could be addressed. It may also address what additional information is considered necessary to justify or support any change. Whether prepared

before or after a public meeting, however, a detailed staff report is considered to be an integral part of the plan amendment process and should be available for Regional Council's consideration before a public hearing is held.

The plan amendment process which is reflected in the public participation resolution in Appendix "A", includes the following steps:

1. All plan amendment proposals would initially be brought to Regional Council for direction. A staff report would be prepared for each proposal which would outline the issue and provide a recommended course of action. This report would also indicate whether or not, in staff's opinion, the issue was local or regional in scope. For regional issues which Regional Council decides to pursue, staff would recommend an appropriate public participation program for Council's consideration.

2. For more local planning issues, Regional Council would refer the matter to the appropriate Community Council/PAC where a public meeting would be required. Where a PAC exists, that body would be responsible for holding the public meeting. Where no PAC exists, staff or the Community Council would hold the required public meeting.

3. Following the public meeting, the PAC (staff, where a PAC does not exist) would submit its recommendation to the Community Council along with minutes of the public meeting and any written submissions and/or staff report(s) prepared concerning the issue.

4. The Community Council would consider the information and recommendation of the PAC (or staff) prior to making a recommendation to Regional Council. All information considered by the Community Council, including any PAC recommendation and staff reports would be forwarded to Regional Council.

5. Staff prepares specific amendments and/or advice on amendments, to accompany the Community Council/PAC recommendation to Regional Council.

6. Regional Council would consider the advice and decide whether or not to hold a public hearing.

7. If a Community Council or a Planning Advisory Committee is not in place for the area effected by the amendment the processes referred to above would be carried out by staff.

CONCLUSION

As the body charged with the responsibility for approving planning strategy amendments, the Planning Act requires that Regional Council adopt a public participation program. The program outlined in Appendix "A", follows the same basic model as that which existed in the four municipal units prior to amalgamation. It is designed to solicit public input from the area(s) directly affected and is also intended to be supportive of the Community Council framework which is now in place for all of HRM.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Requiring public meetings may have budget implications related to committee meeting expenses.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Status Quo - Regional Council could continue to use the public participation programs which existed prior to amalgamation. Staff does not recommend this course of action as it is, at best, only a short term solution and does not recognize the reality of new Community Councils.

2. Regional Council could approve an alternative public participation program from that put forward in this report. Staff would require further direction from Regional Council before being in a position to comment.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix "A" - Resolution concerning public participation program
Flow chart outlining process for local plan amendments

Further information regarding the contents of this report may be obtained by contacting Bill Butler, Donna Davis-Lohnes or Bill B. Campbell, Managers of Planning Services, Central, Eastern, Western Regions, respectively.

For additional copies or for information on the report's status, please contact Gail Foisy, Admin/PAC Coordinator at 490-4937

APPENDIX "A"

RESOLUTION REGARDING
A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FOR
MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY AMENDMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of Halifax Regional Municipality does hereby adopt the following public participation program pursuant to Section 34(1) of the Planning Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia 1983, Chapter 9, for the purpose of Municipal Planning Strategy amendments:

1. All requested or proposed amendments to individual Municipal Planning Strategies shall be directed to Regional Council for preliminary review. Where Regional Council determines that it does not wish to entertain a plan amendment proposal, no further action shall be taken.

2. Where Regional Council determines that it wishes to further consider the merits of a plan amendment proposal, it shall make a determination as to whether the matter is of regional or local significance. Where an issue is considered to be a local planning matter, the following procedures shall apply:

    (a) Regional Council shall refer the matter to the appropriate Community Council/PAC.

    (b) The Community Council or the PAC having jurisdiction for the area affected, or municipal staff where no PAC exists, shall hold a public meeting concerning the proposed amendments.

    (c) Notice of the public meeting at which the proposed amendments will be discussed, shall be published in a newspaper circulating in the area affected a minimum of seven (7) clear days prior to the meeting. The notice shall indicate the time, date and place of the meeting as well as the location(s) and hours during which written material concerning the proposed amendments may be inspected by members of the public.

    (d) Minutes of this public meeting and all related written submissions and staff reports shall be forwarded to the Community Council along with the recommendation of a PAC, where one exists.

    (e) The Community Council shall forward its recommendation and all related information to Regional Council.

    (f) If a Community Council or a Planning Advisory Committee is not in place for the area effected by the amendment the processes referred to in clauses (b) to (e) shall be carried out by staff.

3. Nothing in this resolution shall preclude Regional Council or a Community Council from taking such other measures as are deemed necessary to obtain public opinion regarding the amendment of any municipal planning strategy.

4. All other public participation resolutions which may be in effect are hereby rescinded.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the resolution of which this a true copy was duly approved by Council at a duly called meeting of the Council of Halifax Regional Municipality held on the _____ day of _____ A.D., 1997.

GIVEN under the had of the Municipal Clerk under the corporate seal of the said Municipality this _____ day of _____ ___, A.D., 1997.

_____

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk
Halifax Regional Municipality

Plan Area: MPS/LUB	Language	Planning Application or Issue	Type of Engagement
Beaverbank, Hammonds Plains, Upper Sackville			
	BW-1: "No development agreement shall be approved unless a master storm water management plan has been prepared, reviewed by the Bedford Waters Advisory Board and accepted by the Municipality…." **BW-3:** "A water quality monitoring program shall be undertaken for the Paper Mill Lake watershed, illustrated on Schedule BW-2 to track the eutrophication process. … Specifics of the program are to be negotiated under the terms of a development agreement in consultation with the Bedford Watershed Advisory Board."	Development Agreement – Bedford West Water Service System	Advisory Board Meeting (RWAB Terms of Reference)
MPS	**P-142** It shall be the intention of Council, in considering amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, to give notification to community groups and ratepayers associations in the area affected and further, to hold a public participation session within the polling district for which the amendment is proposed, pursuant to the Municipal Government Act.	MPS Amendments	"Public Participation Session" (1997 Resolution)
LUB	**27.5** Public Hearing Notification requirements	LUB amendment, DA	Mail (Charter requirement)
Bedford			
	Policy CP-I: It shall be the intention of Town Council, through the Town's Chief Administrative Officer, to establish and maintain an effective system of communication in the Town providing for a flow of information to and from the Town's residents.	N/A	Providing information, public notices of meetings and advisory committee activities through mailings to resident associations,

	Policy CP-2: It shall be the intention of Town Council to encourage public attendance at Town Council and advisory committee meetings by means such as notices in Town-sponsored media and by regular mailings to resident associations. **Policy CP-3**: It shall be the intention of Town Council to make available in a timely manner, through the Library and Town Offices, all approved and up to date minutes from Council and Advisory Committees, and all Town by-laws, regulations, the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law, to provide an opportunity for a more informed public. **Policy CP-4:** It shall be the intention of Town Council to hold semi-annual Public Information Meetings to enable residents of the Town to meet with Town Council and staff to exchange information on matters of Town business. These meetings shall be advertised three weeks in advance, said notice shall include the time, place, and purpose/agenda of the meeting. **Policy CP-5:** It shall be the intention of Town Council to investigate and put in place effective avenues for the communication of Town matters by such means as community notice boards in convenient locations in the Town and by making use of community cable television and local radio.		community TV, and local radio.
	Policy CP-6: It shall be the intention of Town Council to conduct a public meeting before disposing of any Town-owned land in accordance with the provisions of the Town's Act and those related policies of the Town of Bedford.	Disposal of municipal land	Public meeting (AO50)
	Policy CP-7: It shall be the intention of Town Council to keep residents of the Town informed about planning matters and how they may have input into the planning process on a regular basis and at all stages of the process. **Policy CP-8:** It shall be the intention of Town Council to encourage the active participation of residents in Town planning and development matters through the Planning Advisory Committee (BPAC) as set out in the Planning Act, through the Bedford Waters Advisory	All Rezoning and Development Applications	Public Information Meeting

		Committee (BWAC) where appropriate, and by placing notices on the community notice boards (Policy CP-5). **Policy CP-9:** It shall be the intention of Town Council to hold a public information meeting on all rezoning and development applications prior to BPAC forwarding a recommendation to Town Council. The proponent shall participate in these public information meetings. Notices for such meetings shall be distributed to owners/occupants of dwellings within 500 feet of the area proposed for rezoning or a development agreement and a notice shall appear in the newspaper at least seven days in advance of the meeting.		
Cole Harbour Westphal				
	MPS	**Morris-Russell Lake Secondary Plan…"**a public participation committee was established to coordinate and develop the Master Plan. This Committee or a Sub-Committee thereof, would also be responsible for the evaluation of the detailed CDD approval process." (p. 67)	CDD Zone applications	
		IM-12 In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Cole Harbour/Westphal Community Council shall hold a Public Hearing according to the Planning Act.	LUB amendments, DA's, rezoning, MPS amendments	Public Hearing, posted notices (Charter requirement)
		IM-13 It shall be the intention of Council to refer all proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and/or the standards of the Land Use By-law for Cole Harbour/Westphal, to the Cole Harbour/Westphal Community Council for comment.	MPS amendments	Refer for comment (AO1)
	LUB	**25.7** Public Hearing Notification (page 90)	Planning applications	Hearing Notification requirements (Charter requirement)
Dartmouth				
	MPS	**Policy H-3(AA)** It shall be the intention of Council to establish a Public Participation Committee upon the Municipality receiving an application to develop lands within a CDD. The composition of the Committee should include local residents, other interested citizens, affected land owners, the proponent and municipal	CDD development agreements and substantive amendments to DAs	Public participation committee

		staff. The general purpose of the Committee is to collaborate to produce the conceptual plans and detailed plans for the area to be developed, as described by Policies H-3A, H-3B and H-3C. Council shall also establish a Committee to deal with substantial amendments to CDD Agreements.		
	MPS	**IP-1, C (8)** In considering zoning amendments and contract zoning, Council shall have regard to the following: in addition to the public hearing requirements as set out in the Planning Act and City by-laws, all applications for amendments may be aired to the public via the "voluntary" public hearing process established by City Council for the purposes of information exchange between the applicant and residents.	LUB Amendments, rezoning	Voluntary public hearing process (1997 Resolution)
	LUB	**18.(1)** Council may by resolution and after public hearing duly advertised, approve any specific development request which would not otherwise be permitted by this by-law, but no approval shall be given inconsistent with the Municipal Development Plan;	Various	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
Downtown Dartmouth				
	SPS	**Policy I-7** Council shall ensure that the planning process is open and consultative and provide a variety of opportunities to increase public awareness on planning issues and have input in the process including mechanisms such as: • public notice of major capital infrastructure works; • public information meetings held on major development proposals • Public meetings before the sale of publicly owned land parcels, in particular on the waterfront	Major development proposals; Sale of public land	PIMs, Public Meetings (1997 Resolution)
	LUB	-	-	-
Downtown Halifax				
	SMPS	**4.1 Downtown Halifax HCD.** In 2003, HRM adopted a procedure for public participation in the heritage conservation district planning process which includes input from a Stakeholder Steering Committee, property		Public meetings and a public hearing (1997 Resolution)

	owners, and the public through required public meetings and a public hearing		
	Policy 15. HRM shall adopt the site plan approval process in the Land Use By-law to ensure high quality design for downtown development. The site plan approval criteria shall be defined in the Land Use By-law and shall address the following matters: (c) requirements for public consultation prior to an application for site plan approval being submitted to the Municipality.	Site Plan Approval	Public consultation (1997 Resolution)
	Policy 90. HRM shall establish public participation programs for amendments to this Plan that describe opportunities for public input based upon the scope and intent of the amendment.	Plan Amendments	Public participation program (1997 Resolution)
LUB	**(7A)** Prior to submitting a substantive application for site plan approval (RC-Dec 13/11;EMar 3/12), the applicant shall undertake public consultation concerning the project using the following three methods, in a format acceptable to the Development Officer (RCDec 13/11;E-Mar 3/12): (a) open house; (b) public kiosk; and (c) website/online forum.	Site Plan Approval	(a) open house; (b) public kiosk; and (c) website/online forum.
Eastern Passage/Cow Bay			
MPS	**IM-12** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the Planning Act.	LUB amendment, DA's	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
LUB	**27.7** Public Hearing notification requirements	Bylaw amendment, DA, or amendment to DA.	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
Eastern Shore (East)			
MPS	**IM-4** It shall be the intention of Council, in considering amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, to: (c) consider holding a public participation session within the Plan Area in accordance with Sections 34 and 50 of the Planning Act.		Public participation session
	IM-11 In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a	LUB amendment, DA's	Public hearing (Charter requirement)

	public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.		
LUB	**12.7** Public hearing notification requirements	Bylaw amendment, DA, or amendment to DA.	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
Eastern Shore (West)			
MPS	**IM-11** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.	LUB amendment, DA's	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
	IM-4 (c) consider holding a public participation session within the Plan Area in accordance with Sections 34 and 50 of the Planning Act.		Public participation session
LUB	**13.7** Public hearing notification requirements	Bylaw amendment, DA, or amendment to DA.	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
Halifax Plan Area			
MPS	**Section 12:** Citizen participation **12.4** The City shall develop procedures for consulting with the public on decisions which will affect the planning or development of the City. These procedures shall pay particular attention to the timing of public access to information, the methods for providing it, and the need of individuals and groups to have an adequate time period for review prior to final City Council decisions. **12.5** The City shall encourage citizens to make written submissions on planning issues or items of neighbourhood concern (for example, development proposals, rezoning issues). These briefs will, if possible, accompany staff reports to City Council, but in any case shall be submitted to Council for their information.	" decisions which will affect the planning or development of the City."	Various, including encouraging written submissions from public. (1997 Resolution)
	5.1 (p.99) In considering the re-use of existing community facilities such as schools, the City shall consult with the residents of the area through a public meeting forum to determine priorities for re-use of such facilities.	Re-use of community facilities	Public meeting (AO50)
Peninsula LUB	**Schedule L.**	Planning applications on Schedule L lands	Public hearing (Charter requirement)

	87A (e) Council may, after a public hearing and by resolution, approve any specific development requested which would not otherwise be permitted by this bylaw […] **(g)** applications for amendments to agreements made pursuant to Subsection (e) may be made by Council after a public hearing *if deemed necessary*.			
Mainland LUB	**Schedule K** **68 (6)** After holding a public hearing and considering the plan proposal submitted under Subsection 68(5), Council shall determine whether the applicant may proceed to final approval	Schedule K Comprehensive Development District applications	Public Hearing (Charter requirement)	
	Schedule L **69 (e)** Council may, after a public hearing and by resolution, approve any specific development requested which would not otherwise be permitted by this by-law	Planning applications on Schedule L lands	Public Hearing (Charter requirement)	
	Schedule R **74 (b)** Council may, after a public hearing and by resolution, approve any specific development requested which would not otherwise be permitted by this bylaw	Planning applications on Schedule R lands	Public Hearing (Charter requirement)	
Lawrencetown				
MPS	**P-62** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of Sections 62 and 73 of the Planning Act		Public Hearing (Charter requirement)	
	P-65 It shall be the intention of Council, in considering amendments to the municipal planning strategy, to include the participation of the Lawrencetown Citizens Committee (LCC), to give notification to community groups and ratepayers associations, and to consider comments from the LCC in the area affected and further, to hold a public participation session within the municipal district for which the amendment is proposed.	MPS Amendments	Public participation session	
LUB	**13.7** Public hearing notification procedures		Mail (Charter requirement)	
Musquodoboit Valley/ Dutch Settlement				
MPS	**IM-11** It shall be the intention of Council, in considering amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, to give		Public participation session	

		notifications to community groups and ratepayers associations in the area affected and further, to hold a public participation session within the Plan Area, pursuant to the Planning Act.		
		IM-19 In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.	LUB amendments/DA's	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
	LUB	**3.10** Public Hearing notification procedures		Mail (Charter requirement)
North Preston / Lake Major / Lake Loon / Cherry Brook / East Preston				
	MPS	**Industrial use in MU Designation**. Within the Mixed Use Designation, provision is made for selective industrial uses subject to a public hearing and the entering into of a specific development agreement with the Municipality.	DA for Industrial development in MU Designation	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
		IM-10 In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the applicable provisions of the Planning Act.	LUB amendments, DA's	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
	LUB	**3.11** Public hearing notification procedure		Mail (Charter requirement)
Prospect (Planning District 4)				
	MPS	**IM-12** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.	LUB amendments, DA's	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
		IM-16 It shall be the intention of Council to notify all assessed property owners, based on LIMS records, located within five hundred (500) feet of the property boundary of the proposed site by ordinary mail, of any public hearing for any rezoning or development agreement application being considered under the provisions of this planning strategy.	rezoning or development agreement application	Mail (Charter requirement)

		IM-17 It shall be the intention of Council, in considering amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, to give notification to community groups and ratepayers associations in the area affected and further, to hold a public participation session within Planning District 4, pursuant to the Planning Act.	MPS amendments	Public participation session
	LUB	**3.10** Public hearing notification requirements		Mail (Charter requirement)
Chebucto Peninsula (Planning District 5)				
	MPS	**IM-11** In considering amendments to the Land Use By-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.	Amendments to the Land Use By-law or development agreements	Public hearing Mail (Charter requirement)
		IM-13 It shall be the intention of Council, in considering development agreements or amendments to the Land Use By-law, to: (a) give notice of the amendment or agreement by posting the public hearing notice in any post office, convenience store and fire hall within a two (2) mile radius of the lands proposed for amendment or agreement within the Plan Area; and (b) notify ratepayers organizations, churches and school boards of the public hearing by registered letter.	Development agreements or amendments to the Land Use By-law	Public hearing (Charter requirement)
	LUB	**22.7** Public Hearing Notification		Mail (Charter requirement)
St. Margaret's Bay (Planning Districts 1 and 3)				
	MPS	**IM-10** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.	Amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements	Public Hearing (Charter requirement)
	LUB	**24.7** public hearing notification		Mail (Charter requirement)
Schubenacadie Lakes (Planning Districts 14 and 17)				

MPS	**P-156** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of Section 60 of the Planning Act.	Amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements	Public Hearing (Charter requirement)
LUB	**26.7** Public hearing notification		Mail (Charter requirement)
Lake Echo-Porters Lake (Planning Districts 8/9)			
MPS	**P-7** It shall be the intention of Council to adopt a new municipal by-law in accordance with the Halifax County Stormwater Drainage Act so that appropriate stormwater drainage provisions and design criteria shall be applied within the Plan Area. Furthermore, it shall be the intention of Council to consult with residents and property owners of the Plan Area prior to the adoption of any stormwater drainage by-law applying to any portion of the Plan Area. As part of the consultation process, public meetings shall be held within the Plan Area and shall be advertised […]	Stormwater infrastructure development	Public meetings
	P-83 (c) where the proposed amendment is applicable only to Planning Districts 8 & 9, hold a public participation session within the Plan Area in accordance with Sections 34 and 50 of the Planning Act.		Public participation session
	P-90 In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.		
	P-91 (c) where a major amendment applying only to the Planning Districts 8 and 9 Land Use By-law is proposed, with the exception of an amendment to the schedules of the Land Use By-law, ask the Planning Advisory Committee to hold a public meeting within the Plan Area prior to the Public Hearing.	LUB amendment	Public meeting and public hearing
LUB	**23.7** Public hearing notification		Mail (Charter requirement)
Regional Centre Plan			

MPS	**10.1** The HRM Community Engagement Strategy, as updated from time-to-time, shall guide how the Municipality will inform, consult with, and engage the public in developing, amending, and implementing this Plan. Community engagement shall provide opportunities for a diverse range of stakeholders and communities to be consulted on future updates and amendments to this Plan.	MPS amendments	
LUB	**21.** Methods of Public Information and Consultation (1) No public information or public consultation is required before applying for a Level I site plan approval. (2) Public information is required before applying for a Level II site plan approval, and shall include: (a) a website, which meets the requirements of Section 26; and (b) a weather-proof sign at the development site, which meets the requirements of Section 27. (3) Public consultation is required before applying for a Level III site plan approval, and shall include: (a) the items required for public information in Subsection 21(2); and (b) a public meeting, which shall be advertised in accordance with Section 23, conducted in accordance with Section 22, and meet the requirements of Sections 24 and 25. (4) Where public consultation is required, the applicant shall create a complete record including feedback received at any public meeting, from the website, and from any correspondence, and shall submit it with the application for site plan approval.	Site Plan Approval (Level II, III)	Public meeting, Public Information
	22. Requirement of Public Consultation Process At any public meeting required by Clause 21(3)(b), the applicant, the owner of the lot, or a person authorized on their behalf shall: (a) identify how the development meets the requirements of this By-law; and		

	(b) identify any variation of the requirements of this By-law that are being sought.		
	23. Public Consultation: Public Meeting Newspaper Advertisement		
	24. Public Consultation: Public Meeting Days and Times		
	25. Public Consultation: Public Meeting Facility Requirements		
	26. Public Information: Website Component		
	27. Public Information: Weather Proof Sign Component		
Sackville Drive			
SPS	**Policy I-16** A variety of opportunities to increase public awareness on planning issues shall be provided and the public shall have input in all planning processes.	-	-
LUB	-	-	-
Sackville Plan			
MPS	**IM-14** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, the Sackville Community Council shall hold a Public Hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act		Public hearing (Charter requirement)
LUB	**24.7** Public Hearing Notification		Mail (Charter requirement)
Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville			
MPS	**IM-13** In considering amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements, Council shall hold a public hearing according to the provisions of the Planning Act.	Amendments to the land use by-law or development agreements	Public hearing (Charter requirement)

LUB	**22.7** Public hearing notification			Mail (Charter requirement)