

HALIFAX

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Item No. 6

Halifax Regional Council
November 22, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 15, 2022

SUBJECT: **HalifACT and the impacts of climate change on women and children**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report was requested by the Regional Council session on April 5, 2022, Item No. 15.4.2:

MOVED by Councillor Purdy, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Fully fund and implement HalifACT; and
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer prepare a staff report that considers the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and children and develop a mitigation strategy.

MOVED by Councillor Kent, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT the motion be amended to include in accordance with Halifax Regional Municipality's yearly budget considerations and process.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, subsection 34(1) provides: The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, the Women's Advisory Committee Administrative Order, section 6 provides: The Committee shall advise Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on matters related to women as follows: ... (d) provide information and resources about women's gender-based issues

to Council, including the use of Gender-Based Analysis Plus and (e) advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Committee.¹

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax) is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Halifax is positioned on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, which exhibits high wave energy, and our geographic proximity to the Gulf Stream means that we experience more storms than any other region in Canada.² Our unique location puts us on the path of post-tropical storms and hurricanes and significant winter storm events (Nor'easters). Nova Scotia has the highest relative sea level rise predictions in Canada. Halifax's 2,400 kilometers of coastline are subject to storm surge, coastal flooding, accelerated erosion and inundation. Halifax's residents, infrastructure and ecosystems already regularly experience impacts from extreme weather events, heavy precipitation, winter freeze and thaw cycles, and heavy winds.

Climate change will greatly exacerbate these challenges. In the coming years, we will experience rising temperatures, heat waves, increased precipitation, more frequent and more extreme weather events, wildfires, and flooding.³ Our region's water quality and availability will be impacted by rising temperatures, ecosystem decline, droughts, increasing incidents of algae blooms, contamination, and saltwater intrusion due to sea level rise. Intensifying and more frequent extreme weather events will damage infrastructure and natural assets and negatively affect our population both through acute incidents (weather-related emergencies) and chronic (health, social, economic) impacts. Acute incidents will cause system disruptions, damaging our region's economic health and straining our emergency services and health care system further.

In 2018, Halifax began working on a comprehensive climate action plan for the region. This work included a large group of stakeholders from all levels of government, industry, non-profit networks, utilities, academics, the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian communities, Acadian groups, youth, and others to develop a plan to both mitigate our municipality's GHG emissions and to take action to adapt to climate change impacts.

On January 29, 2019, Halifax Regional Council declared a climate emergency.⁴

On June 23, 2020, Halifax Regional council unanimously adopted HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together, an ambitious climate plan for our region to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050 while enhancing community and ecosystem resilience and preparedness.

HalifACT states that:

"Not all people will be affected equally by climate change. Distinct groups, communities, and populations will be disproportionately affected by climate change due to one or more of the following factors: increased exposure to climate risks, increased sensitivity to climate risks, and limited adaptive capacity for coping with climate impacts. Similarly, not all will be able to equally contribute to the significant action and investment required to decarbonize.

The success or failure in moving towards a decarbonized and climate resilient future will be measured both by how quickly society is able to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and by how equitable and sustainable the transition is. With the constraint of limited resources, it is essential to prioritize the most vulnerable and affected members of the community, many of whom are already confronting other social and economic challenges.

¹ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2019-004-GOV.pdf>

² [Adapting to a Changing Climate in NS.pdf \(novascotia.ca\)](https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/energy-environment/Adaptation%20Baseline%20Report_0.pdf)

³ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/energy-environment/Adaptation%20Baseline%20Report_0.pdf

⁴ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/190129rc1471.pdf>

We must consider social equity at all levels of decision-making, program design, and implementation.”⁵

Certain groups, referred to as climate vulnerable populations, will be disproportionately affected due to their increased exposure and sensitivity to climate risks, or lack of adaptive capacity to deal with the impacts. Communities that are highly exposed or sensitive to climate risks, or have less capacity to respond to these risks, are often referred to as climate vulnerable populations.

The table below includes (but is not limited to) those considered to be more vulnerable to climate change in the literature⁶.

Climate vulnerability as a function of >	Exposure	Sensitivity	Adaptive Capacity
	<i>Physical / geographic</i>	<i>Physical / social</i>	<i>Social / Economic</i>
Climate vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location (eg. In a hazard area - Poor quality housing/living conditions - People experiencing homelessness or people who are under-housed - Outdoor occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elderly - Young children - Persons with pre-existing illnesses/bad health - Persons with disabilities - Pregnant women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low income - Racialized groups - Immigrants & refugees - Person without access to insurance - People experiencing homelessness or people who are under-housed - Non-english speakers - Aboriginal peoples - Women - Single-headed householders - Public housing residents - Undocumented individuals - Socially isolated persons - Residents in neighbourhood improvement areas

After a series of presentations to the Women’s Advisory Committee in late 2021 and early 2022 from Ecology Action Centre, the Climate Emergency Unit, and the Municipality’s Environment & Climate Change (ECC) division, that Committee made the motion referenced in the Origin section of this report.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to provide any available information on the impacts of climate change on women⁷ and children and to identify strategies and actions to mitigate those impacts in the municipality.

Currently, there is a lack of data available to show how climate change impacts are affecting women and children in our region. Neither the municipality nor the province track emergency management data in a gender disaggregated way.

⁵ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/energy-environment/HRM_HaliFACT_vNew%20Logo_.pdf Page 13. Section 1.4.3 ‘A Just Transition’

⁶ Adaptation Baseline Report: https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/energy-environment/Adaptation%20Baseline%20Report_0.pdf

⁷ For the purposes of this report, we define a woman as anyone who identifies as a woman.

This is not unique to our region; a lack of gender disaggregated data was identified in several international reports as a recognized research gap that currently limits analysis of differential impacts of climate risks and adaptation actions.

Global context

In the absence of regional data, a review of global literature on the topic was conducted. In addition to literature review, staff consulted with university professors, researchers, leaders of local non-profit organizations, representatives of municipal committees, and municipal and provincial government employees in Nova Scotia and other Canadian provinces. Information regarding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women in Canada was also reviewed, as this data is current, includes gender-based analysis and is relevant when extrapolating the impacts of the pandemic to climate change impacts. A United Nations Development Program report states that:

*“Gender inequalities intersect with climate risks and vulnerabilities. Women’s historic disadvantages—their limited access to resources, restricted rights, and a muted voice in shaping decisions—make them highly vulnerable to climate change. The nature of that vulnerability varies widely, cautioning against generalization. But climate change is likely to magnify existing patterns of gender disadvantage.”*⁸

Globally, there is significant evidence that ‘increasing climate risks are projected to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and social inequalities and inequities.’⁹ In 2022, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report entitled ‘IPCC Report AR6 WGII Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability’. The report identifies vulnerable groups as women, the elderly and children in low-income households, Indigenous Peoples, and minority groups. The report identifies that these vulnerable groups will be disproportionately affected by food insecurity, water insecurity, mortality due to floods and droughts, impacted physical and mental health, greater economic effects, disease susceptibility and lower capacity to adapt.

In June 2022, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) released a report that stated that ‘the adverse effects of drought, floods, hurricanes, extreme rainfall events and sea level rise are often felt more keenly by women than men because of systemic gender discrimination and societal expectations related to gender roles. These adverse effects have varied social, financial, and economic dimensions.’¹⁰

Impacts on Children

Children will be more impacted by climate change than any other segment of our population. Climate change impacts threaten the health, nutrition, development, and survival of children. Health Canada released a report entitled ‘Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate: Advancing our Knowledge for Action’ in February 2022. Chapter 4 of this report focuses on mental health and wellbeing and states that: ‘Climate change increases risks to the mental health and well-being of many people in Canada. Specific populations that can be disproportionately and inequitably affected include those experiencing health inequities based on race, culture, gender, age, socio-economic status, ability, and geographic location.’¹¹ Younger generations carry a disproportionate burden of grief, anxiety, fear and hopelessness for the future.

⁸ United Nations Development Program, 2007/2008 Development Report <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-20078>

⁹ IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegria, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösche, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, 3056 pp., doi:10.1017/9781009325844. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf

¹⁰ [Dimensions and examples of the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change and opportunities for women. Synthesis report by the secretariat \(unfccc.int\)](https://www.unfccc.int/publications/Dimensions-and-examples-of-the-gender-differentiated-impacts-of-climate-change-the-role-of-women-as-agents-of-change-and-opportunities-for-women)

¹¹ <https://changingclimate.ca/health-in-a-changing-climate/chapter/4-0/>

The ability of children to have agency and make self-preserving decisions during extreme weather events is very limited. Children must rely on their caregivers to take appropriate action to keep them safe and well. Similarly, children have limited ability to profoundly change policy and decision-making.

Key factors in climate vulnerability

Mitigation of the disproportionate impacts of climate change requires exploration into the multitude of factors that disadvantage women and others in their ability to prepare for, survive, adapt, and recover from climate change impacts.

The vulnerability of women and children is increased when they experience overlapping discrimination and disadvantages. Intersectionality can increase vulnerability to climate change impacts by deepening inequities. ‘Intersectionality’ is a concept that was first used by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a lawyer and scholar who identifies as an African American woman, to identify how we all have multiple parts of our identity that overlap and intersect to make us who we are. Our identities influence how we experience systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Intersectionality is a framework that helps us understand how people are shaped by the interactions of their different social locations (e.g., race/ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion, and education among many others).

While the marginalization of women is a complex subject, with institutional, cultural, social, economic, and political layers to be considered, several broad themes emerged from the literature that can be applied to all climate vulnerable populations:

THEME	Details
Access to resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about climate risks, adaptation strategies and emergency preparedness • Financial resources, materials, and skills to undertake action to increase resilience • Post-event: necessities of life such as clean drinking water, food, safe shelter • Post-event: resources required to recover, such as childcare, transportation, utilities, continued safe shelter, financial and material resources to repair and restore home and property
Decision-making power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globally, women are under-represented in climate-related decision making.
Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In emergency situations, women are at risk from physical danger, lack of necessary care and lack of supplies to support reproductive and maternal health. This increases as socio-economic status decreases. • Violence against women has been shown to increase dramatically in emergency situations.
Employment stability/Economic recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme events expose gender inequities in Canada’s employment sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic provided vivid examples of the disproportionate economic impact on women (see ATTACHMENT C).

Mitigating the disproportionate impacts of climate change

The development of Halifax’s climate action plan, HalifACT, was done through an extensive consultative process that was inclusive and intentionally included vulnerable populations. The actions outlined in HalifACT are designed to:

- Reduce emissions by decarbonizing infrastructure and systems

- Support adaptation actions
- Enhance emergency preparedness
- Increase community resilience to withstand climate change impacts

The plan was created with a lens of equity and inclusion, with the intention of leaving no one behind as we move towards a low-carbon economy and prepare for the impacts of climate change. The plan outlines a multitude of ways that our municipality can support vulnerable residents, including women and children, to prepare for, respond to and recover from climate change impacts. These include:

- Communications/Information Sharing
- Community Engagement and Outreach
- Emergency Management
- Adaptation Actions

The following is a summary of some of the activities already underway in these areas:

Communications/ Information Sharing	ECC is working with Corporate Communications to enhance resources for residents about climate change impacts, HalifACT actions and how residents can act to both reduce emissions and prepare for climate change impacts. A long-term communications strategy is being finalized, with many communication projects underway including videos, marketing and branding.
Community Engagement and Outreach	<p>ECC is partnering on initiatives to provide resources and strengthen community capacity to climate change impacts. In 2022, the ECC team enhanced internal capacity for this work with the addition of a Climate Engagement Specialist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storm Kits for Newcomers: piloted in 2021 and is now being expanded both for more delivery to the target audience and for new program offerings to other vulnerable populations, including women, gender-diverse individuals and children. This project combines the provision of educational information and emergency supplies (storm kits) for community preparedness. This initiative is a partnership between ECC, Emergency Management and Halifax Libraries. • ECC is also contributing to Halifax’s JustFOOD Action Plan, which will strengthen our local food system and better prepare Halifax communities to withstand the impacts of climate change on food security in our region. • Climate Action Challenge in partnership with the Halifax Innovation Outpost – grants to support community climate action.
Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECC is working closely with Emergency Management, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO, Data Analytics and Visualization and other business units to assess data opportunities and explore how to disaggregate data to better identify how climate change is impacting vulnerable residents. ECC is currently supporting Emergency Management in the update of the municipality’s Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA). • Purchased a refrigerated truck to preserve food in vulnerable communities during emergencies.
Adaption Action	ECC is working on a variety of projects to enhance coastal preparedness, improve critical infrastructure and services resilience, improve stormwater management, and protect, restore, and expand natural areas and green infrastructure assets.

Application of a Gender Lens to HalifACT Actions

To ensure a just transition, the application of a gender lens to HalifACT actions will be important. Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)¹² is an evidence-based process used by multiple levels of government, including municipalities like the City of Edmonton, the City of Calgary, and the City of Montréal, in order to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, services, programs and initiatives. The process involves examining disaggregated data and reflecting on social, economic, and cultural norms and biases related to gender. The “plus” also acknowledges the importance of intersectionality and that this process goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. (See *ATTACHMENT A* for more information about this training and Halifax’s commitment to using GBA+ Analysis in its operations).

Business Units across Halifax have been participating in GBA+ workshops and applying the tools developed by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) to our work. ECC staff will complete HRM’s *Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) Toolkit Training for Municipal Staff* in November 2022.

Additionally, ECC will be working closely with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO to implement HalifACT to ensure that we are following the guiding principles of the plan. As HRM embarks on activities such as the placement of EV charging stations and enhancing tree canopy in urban centres, a gender lens should be applied to ensure that we are meeting Halifax’s commitment to Safe Cities: Safe Public Spaces. In 2019, Halifax joined this global United Nation’s program and committed to identifying locally relevant and owned solutions, strengthening laws and policies, investing in the safety and economic viability of public spaces and fostering transformative social norms that promote women and girls’ rights to use public spaces free from sexual violence. For more information about Halifax’s work under the Safe Cities: Safe Public Spaces program, see [the presentation](#) to the Women’s Advisory Committee on September 25, 2020 and [the Scoping Study](#) completed in September 2021.

HRM’s Public Safety Office has also created a Women’s Safety Audit, which is a participatory tool used to build safer neighbourhoods, schools, campuses, workplaces, transit systems and other public spaces. Use of this tool in project planning ensures that women and gender-diverse people, including 2SLGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous, and racialized women and gender-diverse people and individuals with disabilities, have a voice in making spaces safer for all Halifax residents.¹³ ECC plans to receive training in the use of this tool.

Application of a Gender Lens in Decision-Making

Work is underway in Halifax to develop the [Women and Gender Equity Strategy \(WGES\)](#). This is a guiding document that is aligned with the [Diversity & Inclusion Framework](#) which will help the municipality advance gender equality in the region. The WGES will provide guidance on how to provide more inclusive municipal services by reducing potential barriers that may be created due to a person’s gender identity and expression as well as other elements of who they are such as ability, race, age, immigration status, language, income, and much more. The WGES is currently working through the public engagement phase of development, and this work is being led by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO.

When considering the global challenge of under-representation of women in climate-related decision making, Halifax is currently in a position of strength. Since the last municipal election in 2020, our Regional Council has had equal representation across our municipality with eight Councillors who identify as men and eight Councillors who identify as women.

¹² <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>

¹³ (See *ATTACHMENT B* for a more detailed description of the Women’s Safety Audit used by Halifax.)

This number rose significantly from the 2 women Councillors elected in 2016 and marks the first time that Halifax Regional Council has had gender parity.

‘...women’s participation and leadership at multiple levels contributes to stronger environmental and climate outcomes.’¹⁴

The Women’s Advisory Committee is an important asset which will further ensure robust application of a gender lens in municipal decision-making. On November 26, 2019, Halifax Regional Council approved the creation of the Women’s Advisory Committee, to support the creation of a gender-inclusive municipality and provide advice to Council on matters relevant to the municipal mandate.¹⁵

Halifax’s creation of the Women’s Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee, the Accessibility Committee, and the upcoming African Descent Advisory Committee help to ensure that there is a voice/lens of diversity and inclusion in municipal decision-making. It will be important for the municipality to leverage these resources effectively as we implement HalifACT.

External to the municipality, there are several organizations working to change the gender imbalance in leadership and decision-making. Equal Voice¹⁶ is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to electing more women and gender diverse candidates to all levels of political office in Canada. The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women has a campaign school¹⁷ intended to increase the numbers and diversity of women in leadership. This program prepares individuals to run for public office, organize campaigns or pursue non-elected political roles.

Furthermore, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO is launching a Federation of Canadian Municipalities [Canadian Women in Local Leadership](#) project to support Indigenous women in getting involved in local leadership via Council, Boards and Committees.

People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027

The Halifax Partnership released the new economic strategy for Halifax in 2022, and its vision is “A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the well-being of people and planet first.” This is a very different strategy than those that have come before it, and includes themes of growing the green economy, and of inclusive economic growth that provides opportunities for everyone.

HalifACT identifies that Halifax’s transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future will generate professional and skilled labour positions and stimulate local economies. It presents a significant economic opportunity, as much of the work will result in a positive return on investment.

The Municipality’s collaborative partnerships with the provincial government and with industry will provide our best pathway to influence employment equity outside of municipal hiring. Halifax must act to ensure that the province creates opportunities for women to benefit from green economy jobs and from disaster recovery employment opportunities. Jobs associated with recovery are largely in the skilled trades and these positions are still dominated by men. A just transition will need to address the gender-imbalance associated with these male-dominated trades positions. Nova Scotia has been supporting Women Unlimited, a program to promote full participation of women in trades and technology, since its inception in 2006. The province also created the Office to Advance Women Apprentices in 2019 to engage and support tradeswomen working in construction trades in the province.

¹⁴ Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) Feminist Climate Finance Brief, September 2020 https://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CanadaClimateFinance_FINAL_8312020.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/boards-committees-commissions/s-z/womens-advisory-committee>

¹⁶ <https://equalvoice.ca/>

¹⁷ <https://women.novascotia.ca/campaign-school-women-online-training/introduction>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff consulted with members of the Women's Advisory Committee, staff members across the organization, university professors, researchers, non-profit organization leaders, provincial government staff and community and government representatives from New Brunswick and British Columbia in developing this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Description of GBA+ Analysis and Halifax's commitment to this approach
- Attachment B: Women's Safety Audit description
- Attachment C: Economic Impacts

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: Nancy Anningson, Climate Change Specialist, Environment & Climate Change
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Attachment A: Description of GBA+ Analysis and Halifax's Commitment to this approach

Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)¹ is an analytical process used by multiple levels of government, including municipalities like the City of Edmonton, the City of Calgary, and the City of Montréal, in order to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, services, programs and initiatives. The process involves examining disaggregated data and reflecting on social, economic and cultural norms and biases related to gender. The “plus” also acknowledges the importance of intersectionality² and that this process goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences.

The use of GBA+ aligns with the Municipality's commitment to evidence-based decision making and the goal set out in the Diversity and Inclusion Framework to “identify and addresses systemic barriers in our practices, policies, procedures and programs so that HRM can capitalize on the strengths and talents of our community.” GBA+ offers a tool for Municipal employees to expand their understanding and increase their capacity to respond to the needs of people with diverse identities beyond gender, including but not limited to ability, age, ethnicity, geography, immigration status, income, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

The Municipality recognizes that creating a gender inclusive municipality involves focusing on the needs, experiences and strengths of residents who identify as women, gender diverse and non-binary. On November 26, 2019, Regional Council approved Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV to establish the Women's Advisory Committee in order to support the creation of a gender³ inclusive Municipality. The Committee reports to the Executive Standing Committee. The purpose of the Women's Advisory Committee is to advise the Municipality of the impact that Municipal policies, programs, and services may have on women.⁴ The duties of this Committee, as outlined in their Terms of Reference,⁵ include receiving and reviewing municipal policies, priorities and decisions using a gender lens, and to provide information and resources about women's gender-based issues to Council including the use of Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+).

Members of the Women's Advisory Committee participated in the Government of Canada's free, self-paced GBA+ training course in the fall of 2020 and subsequently recommended to the Executive Standing Committee that this training course should be offered to members of Regional Council as well as municipal staff. Subsequently, Regional Council approved two sets of recommendations that promote training to

¹ <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>

² We all have multiple parts of our identity that overlap and intersect to make us who we are. Our identities influence how we experience systems of power, privilege and oppression. GBA+ draws on the concept of “intersectionality.” This term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a lawyer and scholar, who identifies as an African American woman. Intersectionality is a framework that helps us understand how people are shaped by the interactions of their different social locations (e.g., race/ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion, and education among many others).

³ HRM defines “gender” as the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society or culture may construct or consider appropriate for the categories of “men” and “women” as well as other gender identities. It can result in stereotyping and limited expectations about what people can and cannot do.

⁴ The term ‘women’ refers to all individuals who identify as women. The Municipality understands “gender identity” as each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, man, both, Two-Spirit neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth. Gender identity is distinct from and should not be confused with biological sex or sexual orientation. This definition of “women” also aligns to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities 2022 [Canadian Women in Local Leadership \(CanWILL\)](#) communications as well as HRM's policies and GBA+ resources. For more information, see [HRM's Supporting Transgender and Gender Variant Employees Guideline & Handbook](#)

⁵ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2019-004-GOV.pdf>

support the use of GBA+ for both members of Regional Council⁶ and municipal staff in specific roles on July 20, 2021.⁷ The recommendations are as follows:

1. Add the Federal Government's Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) training program to the elective course offerings within the Corporate Training Catalogue;
2. Promote participation in this course to all employees in leadership roles and those involved in policy and program development;
3. Incorporate the Federal Government's Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into future Councillor orientation programs; and
4. Circulate the Federal Government's (GBA+) training to all current members of Halifax Regional Council and provide any additional support required to those who complete the training program.

Following their approval, municipal staff have actioned these recommendations. Furthermore, The Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO has created additional, specialized resources and training for municipal staff to support them with the use of GBA+ in municipal programs, services and policies. A *GBA+ Toolkit for Municipal Staff* was developed and shared across the organization in 2021. This do-it-yourself toolkit is also accompanied by a full-day training session designed to provide municipal staff with the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to apply GBA+ in their projects. The training is offered through HR's Corporate Training calendar and recommended for staff in leadership roles and those involved in policy and program development.

⁶ [GBA+ Training for All Regional Council Members Executive Standing Committee Report](#)

⁷ [GBA+ Training for Municipal Staff Executive Standing Committee Report](#)

ATTACHMENT B: Women's Safety Audit description

What is a Women's Safety Assessment?

The Women's Safety Assessment (WSA) is a participatory tool used to build safer neighbourhoods, schools, campuses, workplaces, transit systems and other public spaces. It brings together community members and other important stakeholders to assess and make safety recommendations, grounded in people's expertise from their daily lived experience of using, or choosing not to use, the space.

The WSA is based on the belief that the design of physical environments affects our safety. Research shows that when a diversity of women and gender-diverse people, including 2SLGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous and racialized women and gender-diverse people, and women and gender-diverse people with disabilities, are involved in the process of identifying safety concerns in public spaces and developing potential solutions, these spaces are made safer for everyone.

The safer a space feels, the more people will use it, and the safer it will become due to increases in natural surveillance and community stewardship. The tool has been adapted for use all over the globe and endorsed by leading organizations such as UN Women.¹

How was the safety assessment developed?

Safety assessments were first developed in 1989 by the Metro Toronto Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC).

The tool builds on the best practices of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and incorporates culturally competent, community development, and gender-based approaches.

The tool considers how different people experience the space through 7 Principles of Design:

1. Know where you are and where you are going



- Signage
- Signals
- Orientation

2. See and be Seen



- Visibility
- Lighting
- Hiding places

3. Hear and be Heard

¹ The municipality joined the UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces program in 2019.



- Rush hour
- Peak circulation
- Social use of space
- Proximity of others

4. Being able to escape and get help



- Informal and formal surveillance
- Access to emergency services
- Multiple route options

5. A clean and welcoming environment



- Design
- Maintenance
- Management
- Organized space

6. Working together



- Community Participation
- Grassroots involvement
- Partnerships

7. Accessibility and Inclusion



- Universal Accessibility
- Flexible space
- Barriers to Access

In January 2020, HRM's Public Safety Office hosted a training in which a diverse group of residents learned how to use the WSA tool and support/lead assessments.

Every time we do a WSA, we learn more about the process and the way folks use the tool. We adjust the tool based on this feedback, ensuring the assessment process evolves to best reflect our local context.

How does an assessment work?

An assessment is most rich when it includes people who experience a place in different ways so that insights and actions that arise from the assessment reflect a diversity of feelings and experiences of safety in public spaces.

As participants move through a space or place using the tool, they are asked to observe, discuss and record (in notes, photos and maps) their impressions of various social, built and natural features, relying upon their senses, experiences, feelings and perceptions.

Participants complete the assessment together, learning with and from one another, and making recommendations for changes to enhance safety, enjoyment and accessibility of the space. The goal is that, through this process, participants will also feel a sense of reclamation over the spaces they assess, thereby supporting them to use the space more frequently, which, in turn, makes the space safer.

The Public Safety Office prepares a summary of the results of the assessment and sends this to the participants and key stakeholders. Participants can use the findings and recommendations from the WSA in their own community efforts to shape the public space, as well as work with other stakeholders and decision makers to implement the recommendations.

For more information about HRM's Women's Safety Assessment tool or to organize a safety assessment with your community, organization, business unit or other group, please contact Amy Brierley, HRM's Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Coordinator at amy.brierley@halifax.ca or 902 430 6703.

ATTACHMENT C

Gender Inequity related to Employment stability/Economic Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed gender inequities in Canada's employment sectors. The Canadian Women's Foundation released a report in September 2021 entitled 'Resetting Normal: Lessons from the Pandemic'.¹ Some noteworthy statistics related to employment from that report are:

- During the pandemic, 72% of Canada's 8,700 childcare centres closed and workers lost their jobs. In Canada, childcare workers are 97% women.
- Throughout the pandemic, Canadian women have been much more likely to lose their jobs than Canadian men. In the first month of the pandemic, women accounted for 70% of all job losses.

The report states that the pandemic will have long-term negative consequences to women's equality² and that the federal government has acknowledged the pandemic's disproportionate economic impact on women.

Canadian Women's Foundation describes, based on Statistics Canada 2019 data, that women spend more of their time on unpaid work than men which limits their earning potential. Women's domestic responsibilities constrain their ability to pursue career advancement and participate in skills training courses. In balancing these additional responsibilities, many women work in part-time, seasonal, contract, temporary or otherwise precarious jobs.

Despite efforts towards gender equity³ in Canada, our nation still exhibits a widely recognized indicator of gender inequity: The Gender Pay Gap. This term refers to the difference in average earnings of people based on gender. According to Statistics Canada as of 2021, the gender pay gap for full-time and part-time employees is 0.89, which means women make 89 cents for every dollar men make.⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic really brought to light the significant economic disparities that exist in Canada, and has had a large and lasting negative impact on vulnerable populations.

¹<https://fw3s926r0g42i6kes3bxg4i1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Resetting-Normal-Summary-Report-web-21sept.pdf>

² HALIFAX's Office of Diversity and Inclusion defines the following: 'Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, gender diverse and non-binary people, men and everyone along the gender spectrum. This definition is adapted from UN Women <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>

³ Gender equity is the process or practice that will help us achieve gender equality. Equity means giving everyone what they need to succeed. Source: HRM's Diversity and Inclusion Framework

⁴<https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/the-gender-pay-gap/#:-:text=The%20gender%20pay%20gap%20for%20full%2Dtime%20employees%20is%200.90,71%25%20of%20what%20men%20make.>