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Item No. 10
Halifax Regional Council
May 21, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 21, 2024

SUBJECT: **Accessibility Strategy Annual Update 2023-2024**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

May 18, 2021 Regional Council motion (item 11.1.6): MOVED by Councillor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Mancini THAT Halifax Regional Council: 1. Adopt the Accessibility Strategy as set out in Attachment 1 of the staff report dated April 19, 2021; 2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to carry out the actions contained in the Accessibility Strategy as part of the multi-year budgeting and business planning process; and 3. Request that the Chief Administrative Officer provide annual progress reports on the implementation of the Accessibility Strategy to Regional Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Accessibility Act, S.N.S. 2017, c. 2, subsection 39(2) provides:

39...(2) A municipality, university or organization shall prepare and make publicly available an accessibility plan within one year of being prescribed as a public sector body

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, subsections 34(1) and 34 (3) provides:

34 (1) 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.

...

(3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.

BACKGROUND

Following the approval of the Accessibility Strategy by Council in May 2021, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO formed the Accessibility Strategy Task Force. This Task Force is comprised of municipal staff representing all business units, and the goal of the Task Force is to oversee the implementation of the Accessibility Strategy action items. Task Force members were assigned to various subcommittees based on their areas of expertise as well as the needs of the highest-priority action items at the time of implementation. There are presently three subcommittees: Built Environment Subcommittee, Employment

Subcommittee, and the Information and Communications Subcommittee. The Information and Communications Subcommittee was formed in early 2024 to begin implementing the Information and Communications action items that had a start date of 2024.

DISCUSSION

To date, two (2) of the original thirty action items in the Accessibility Strategy are reported as completed and twenty (20) are reported as in-progress. Therefore, the percentage of action items in progress (66.7%) or complete (6.7%) for the Accessibility Strategy is seventy-three per cent (73.4%). Below is a summary of the overall progress towards the Accessibility Strategy:

Planned Start Timeline	Complete	Incomplete	In Progress	Not Started	Total
2020 – 2022	1	1	11		14
2022 – 2024	1		5	1	6
2024 – 2026			4	3	7
2026 – 2028				3	3
Total	2	1	20	7	30

Highlights from the Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure, Built Environment, and Employment Accessibility Strategy categories are included below.

- The HFXGo app was launched by Transit in November 2023. The app can be used to purchase fare products which can be used on conventional buses, ferry and Access-A-Bus. New HFXGo-exclusive fare products were created and are available.
- In 2023 Halifax Transit constructed 52 accessible bus stops by upgrading existing bus stops or installing new accessible bus stops to areas where route changes took effect in November.
- 76 new accessible pedestrian ramps with tactile warning indicators were installed.
- 335 existing pedestrian ramps were upgraded to accessible pedestrian ramps with tactile warning indicators.
- All future corporate facility projects and major renovations now require the CSA B651-18 to be used as part of the Design Standard and projects are to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level.
- Parks and Recreation increased the number of summer inclusion staff positions to 73 positions in summer 2023. They also had 47 day camp staff helping out with inclusion support.
- 183 staff participated in Going from Support to Inclusion: Accessibility Training.
- In 2022/23 there were 638 hires from equity groups, representing 41.84 per cent of total hires (as outlined in the *Annual Workforce Report*).

The Accessibility Advisor and Accessibility Strategy Task Force are in the process of reviewing the Accessibility Strategy to update it in 2024. In Fall 2023 internal consultations were conducted and a What We Heard report was produced, which will be attached to the updated Accessibility Strategy. In the Spring 2024, community engagement sessions will be held to ensure the community's needs are heard and considered in the updating process of the Accessibility Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Accessibility Strategy has and will result in an increase in multiple municipal service level standards and therefore require an increase in funding for future operating and base capital program budgets. Some of the Strategy's Action items proposing new HRM programs and processes may be absorbed within current staffing and budgets. Additional service program delivery outside of current capacity,

as well as any new or increased capital work added will require an increase to the average tax bill or reductions within other services. The provincial legislation will establish accessibility standards, which may influence the prioritization of recommended accessibility capital work, causing a greater funding and resource pressure on the existing high-risk asset renewal and desired growth projects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While there was a community engagement component to developing the Accessibility Strategy, no further community engagement has been conducted to date to implement action items. As the Accessibility Strategy is presently undergoing a review and update process, community engagement sessions will be held in Spring 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2023-2024 Accessibility Strategy Update Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](https://www.halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Accessibility Strategy Update

Prepared by:

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Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO
April 2024



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Introduction

This report outlines the progress that has been made on implementing the *Accessibility Strategy* (the Strategy) since Regional Council approval in May 2021. The report will focus on a specific set of action items that were scheduled to begin in 2021 and 2022 according to the Strategy, and the progress that has been made on those specific action items from May 2021 to March 2024.

Background

On May 18, 2021, Regional Council approved the Strategy. As part of this motion approval, Council requested an annual update on the progress made towards the Strategy.

The Strategy contains 30 action items, the implementation of which is based on best practices and proposed provincial accessibility standards. At the time of writing this report, the Province of Nova Scotia has not released their accessibility standards that municipalities are expected to follow under the Accessibility Act. The Built Environment standard will be first standard to be released, which is targeted for 2024.

Following Council approval, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO formed the Accessibility Strategy Task Force (the Task Force). This Task Force is comprised of municipal staff representing all business units, and the goal of the Task Force is to oversee the implementation of the Strategy's action items.

Accessibility Strategy Task Force

The Task Force was formed in September 2021. There are 20 members, in addition to the Accessibility Advisor who sits on every subcommittee to provide support. There are seven members on the Employment Subcommittee, 10 members on the Interior Built Environment Subcommittee, and 10 members on the Exterior Built Environment Subcommittee. At the beginning of 2024, the Interior and Exterior Built Environment subcommittees merged to become the Built Environment Subcommittee, with a total 17 members. The Information and Communications Subcommittee also formed at the beginning of 2024, with a total of 5 members. Discussions on specific action items are done during the subcommittee meetings, whereas the Task Force meetings are primarily to provide updates to the Task Force as a whole.

About CSA B651-18 and Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification

There are several action items in the Strategy which refer to the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18 standards as well as the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Gold Certification. This section provides additional explanations of these two measures of built environment accessibility.

The CSA develops standards through a consensus process approved by the Standards Council of Canada. This process brings together volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve consensus and develop standards. The B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment has been developed by the CSA Group. The current version is the sixth

edition entitled *B651-23 Accessible design for the built environment – Implementation Handbook*, which was released in 2023. It has been published as a National Standard of Canada by CSA Group. The Accessibility Strategy referenced the B651-18 standards upon its creation and will continue to do so.

The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program is a rating survey based on Universal Design Principles and the CSA B651 Standard. The program measures the level of meaningful access beyond building code and is based upon the holistic user experience of people of all abilities, including those with mobility, vision, hearing, cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities.

Executive Summary

To date, two (2) of the original thirty action items in the Accessibility Strategy are reported as completed and twenty (20) are reported as in-progress. Therefore, the percentage of action items in progress (66.7%) or complete (6.7%) for the Accessibility Strategy is seventy-three per cent (73.4%). Below is a summary of the overall progress towards the Accessibility Strategy:

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Of the action items that were planned to start by 2024 (20 action items), seventy-five per cent (75%) are considered on-track. Three action items are considered late but are near completion. One action item under the Employment category will remain incomplete due to an inability to fulfill the recommendation caused by a lack of technology, and one action item has not started and is considered at risk of not meeting the planned start timeline.

During 2023-24, the Accessibility Strategy Task Force also focused on identifying ways to measure progress with the selection of fifteen key performance indicators (KPIs) and/or metrics to monitor. These were selected by considering the suitability of metrics against the Accessibility Strategy’s goals and initiatives, and the availability and quality of the data.

It is recognised that better suited KPIs to measuring progress and the impact of the strategy exist but may not be readily available with high data quality and as a result the Task Force will continue to review KPIs and find better ways to measure progress throughout time. This includes reviewing opportunities to leverage established surveys such as the Resident Survey and exploring new datasets to collect more and better information to measure the impact of efforts.

The definitions of each of the selected KPIs and the reason they were selected are found in Appendix A.

Action Item Progress

From 2023-2024, the Accessibility Strategy Task Force and associated subcommittees made progress on action items within Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure, Built Environment, Goods and Services, Information and Communication, and Employment. There are six additional action items that fall under the 'Other' category. The status and progress of each action item is listed below.

Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure

1. *Implement Mobile Data Computer Software, online booking, and automatic fare systems to improve Access-a-bus booking service. (2020-2022)*

Status: In progress

Progress: Mobile data terminals were installed on every Access-A-Bus vehicle in October 2022.

Halifax Transit is currently working to implement an online booking solution for Access-A-Bus trips. The solution is nearly complete with a pilot set to begin in the coming weeks. After a short test period, the solution will be made available to all Access-A-Bus clients.

Work with the vendor, Masabi, for a mobile fare payment app commenced in July 2023, and the HFXGo app was launched in November 2023. The app can be used to purchase tickets which can be used on conventional

buses, ferry, and Access-a-Bus. Clients can pay for Access-a-Bus services in any manner they wish, hard copy (tickets, pass, cash) or the app. The process of installing of HFXGO validators on Halifax Transit conventional buses has begun. The validators will not be available for use by passengers until installation is complete across the entire conventional fleet. There are no onboard validators on Access-a-Bus buses for the Mobile App, however, Operators have been visually verifying payment within the App from day one of launch.

2. *Develop system for booking accessible transportation within the Halifax region (i.e. accessible taxis, Access-A-Bus, regular bus, ferries) (2024-2030)*

Status: In progress

Progress: Transit is collaborating with Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), Access-A-Bus (AAB), Access & Privacy, and web services to improve accessibility for the AAB registration application form. Accessibility would be improved by converting it into a webform.

3. *Develop a passenger survey regarding accessible services to measure success (2022-2024)*

Status: Not started

Progress: Halifax Transit passenger survey questions addressing accessible services are in development and will be incorporated in the 2024 Resident Survey.

4. Ensure all bus stops follow accessible standards (e.g. well-maintained shelters) – 2030 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress: In 2023 Halifax Transit constructed 52 accessible bus stops by upgrading existing bus stops or installing new accessible bus stops to areas where route changes took effect in November. Upgrades included increasing bus pad size and/or sidewalk connectivity. All new bus stops installed must have a bus pad meeting or exceeding the minimum dimensions of 2.5 metres in length, by 1.5 metres width and be connected to an accessible pedestrian route. There remain 696 bus stops that require accessible upgrades.

5. Increase public awareness, to the disability community, around snow removal – 2028 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress: In 2022, Winter Operations developed a fact sheet outlining winter snow removal timelines and processes. As previously directed by Regional Council, Winter Operations will conduct public consultations in support of the Winter Operations Service Standard review every five years. Their next round of consultations is expected to take place in early 2025.

6. Increase number of accessible taxis and/or have an alternative provider for accessible cabs in the Halifax region – 2030 deadline

Status: Complete

Progress: In partnership with Halifax Regional Municipality, Extra Care Taxi began service in July 2022, and now has a fleet of 10 accessible vehicles. As of June 2023, Extra Care Taxi is providing a monthly average of 48 accessible taxi trips per day.

Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure KPIs

KPI Name	Value (2021/22 or 2021)	Value (2022/23 or 2022)	Value (2023/24 or 2023)	Current Trend	Desired Trend
Percentage of accessible ramp deployable transit bus stops	95%	95%	95%	NO CHANGE	UP
Percent completion of accessibility audits – Transit stops	33%	33%	35%	UP	UP
Percentage of fully accessible transit bus stops	68%	70%	71%	UP	UP
Percent very satisfied or satisfied with public transit – Access-A Bus service	75.1%			N/A	N/A

KPI Notes

- In 2023 the number of new bus stops exceeded the number of existing stops that were upgraded. Although Halifax Transit has made

progress in improving the overall accessibility of the network, these upgrades have minimal effects on the overall percentage of accessible ramp deployable transit bus stops. This KPI data is based on a fiscal year.

- In 2021 Halifax Transit hired a consultant to audit required accessibility upgrades to bus stop categorized with a “no ramp” symbol where the accessibility ramp cannot be deployed under any circumstance and nonstandard (as indicated by no symbol) where the ramp can be deployed but may only be used at the passenger’s own determination and risk. In 2023 Halifax Transit began auditing the remaining stops that are categorized as accessible. This KPI data is based on a calendar year.
- Transit stops are being audited to confirm the total number of Transit stops that are fully accessible.
- Of those residents who responded to the question about satisfaction with the Public Transit – Access-A-Bus service provided by the municipality (n=515), 75.1% responded that they were either satisfied (61.3%) or very satisfied (14.0%). 70.8% of respondents to the Survey responded ‘Don’t know/No Opinion’ or did not respond to this question.

Built Environment

- 1. Use Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Gold Certification and CSA B651-18 standards for future infrastructure in the Halifax region (e.g. curb cuts, public washrooms, CSA standards for accessible parking spaces) – 2030 deadline**



Status: In progress

Progress:

Public Works

- Design & Construction Services installed 6 new accessible pedestrian ramps with direction tactile warning indicators.
- Design & Construction Services installed new traffic signals at the intersection of Herring Cove Road and Drysdale Road with APS (accessible pedestrian signals).
- Infrastructure, Maintenance & Operations installed 8 new accessible pedestrian ramps with attention tactile warning indicators.

Facility Design & Construction

- All projects now require the CSA B651-18 to be used as part of the Design Standard and projects are to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level. Projects currently in design are:
 - Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Community Centre
 - Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre

Planning and Development

- Planning and Development installed 68 new accessible pedestrian ramps with attention tactile warning indicators.

Corporate Accommodations:

- Design Standard for all projects require CSA B651-18 and design to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level.
- All new office space acquisitions include an accessibility review.



Parks & Recreation

All outdoor recreation projects require the CSA B651-18 to be used as part of the Design Standard.

2. Adopt Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Gold Certification and CSA B651-18 standards for current infrastructure, including street infrastructure, owned by HRM - 2030 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

Public Works

- Design & Construction Services upgraded 269 existing pedestrian ramps to accessible pedestrian ramps with attention tactile warning indicators.
- Design & Construction Services upgraded existing traffic signals at the intersection of Connaught Avenue and Almon Street with APS (accessible pedestrian signals).
- Traffic Services upgraded 15 existing traffic signals at various locations with APS (accessible pedestrian signals).
- Infrastructure, Maintenance & Operations upgraded 66 existing pedestrian ramps to accessible pedestrian ramps with attention tactile warning indicators.
- Halifax Transit installed attention tactile warning indicator plates at two pedestrian ramps as part of bus stop accessibility upgrades.

Facility Design & Construction

- All projects now require the CSA B651-18 to be used as part of the Design Standard and projects are to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level. Projects currently in design are:
 - East Dartmouth Community Centre
 - St. Mary's Boat Club

Corporate Accommodations

- All Corporate Accommodation projects since 2020 have used CSA B651-18 as part of the Design Standard and beginning in 2023 projects also aim to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level.
 - Renovation of Alderney Gate 5th Floor for Finance and Asset Management was completed in November 2023.
 - Renovation of Alderney Gate 3rd Floor for Parks & Recreation is in progress.
- Design Services for Alderney Gate 2nd Floor renovation for Public Works has been awarded - designing to CSA B651-23 and to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level. Target completion Fall 2025.

3. Develop review system to audit buildings, public facilities, recreational parks/playgrounds, and trails to assess when repairs or upgrades are needed to maintain accessibility – 2024 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

Parks and Recreation

- External Consultant has done audits of three Parks in Halifax Regional Municipality as part of a pilot project. Data will be used to



develop a go forward plan to audit more playground/parks and make adjustments to how outdoor assets are designed and constructed.

Facility Design & Construction

- A term position was created, and the auditor is working through the list of facilities to be audited.

4. Ensure that all signage (including new signage templates), walkways, and equipment for beaches, parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities (e.g. proper gymnasium flooring for para sports) are accessible for individuals with disabilities – 2030 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

Park and Recreation

- P&R to review outcome of accessibility audits to target areas of greatest need for improvement.

Facility Design & Construction

- All projects now require the CSA B651-18 to be used as part of the Design Standard and Projects are to reach RHFAC Gold Certification level.



Built Environment KPIs

KPI Name	Value (2021/22 or 2021)	Value (2022/23 or 2022)	Value (2023/24 or 2023)	Current Trend	Desired Trend
Percentage of accessibility audits completed - buildings			15%	N/A	UP
Percentage of accessibility audits completed - playgrounds			FUTURE KPI		UP
Percentage of municipal buildings meeting accessibility standard(s)			FUTURE KPI	N/A	UP
Annual number of curb cuts built or modified meeting CSA B651		647	403	DOWN	UP
Percentage of municipal beaches with accessible features	30%	35%	35%	UP	UP

KPI Notes

- Accessibility audits completed on 3 Parks by an external consultant.
- The number of curb cuts built or modified meeting CSA B651-18 are based on new development and rehabilitation projects from the HRM Capital Program. There is a planned Sidewalk and Right-of-Way Asset condition inventory scheduled for 2024 which will provide additional data/metrics.
- Accessibility Features on Municipal Beaches (not all inclusive to all sites)
 - Accessible parking spots with access aisle
 - Wide paved pathway to the beaches
 - Accessible washrooms or porta potties
 - Beach mats
 - Accessible floatation chair
 - Kayak/canoe dock

Goods & Services

1. Improve services & operations (e.g. number of recreational support staff) to reflect the demand for accessible recreation – 2026 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

- Demand is currently being measured through an analysis of summer program staff and number of designed spaces in summer camp for children that require inclusion support. A greater analysis of Inclusion

Support Program and Accessibility is scheduled to be completed and will be measuring demand on a greater scale.

- Parks and Recreation increased the number of summer inclusion staff positions to 73 positions in summer 2023. They also had 47 day camp staff helping out with inclusion support.

Goods & Services KPIs

KPI Name	Value (2021/22 or 2021)	Value (2022/23 or 2022)	Value (2023/24 or 2023)	Current Trend	Desired Trend
Number of recreational staff available for inclusion support	45	60	73	UP	UP
Number of staff trained – recreational inclusion support	45	70	90	UP	UP
Percent very satisfied or satisfied with municipal accessibility programming	64.9%			N/A	UP

KPI Notes



- Parks and Recreation are currently in the process of collecting more inclusion support data for seasonal and aquatics programming. This data is planned to be reported in the future.
- In summer 2023, 47 day camp staff were given training on Inclusion support.
- In 2022-2023, seasonal (outside of summer) training was offered specific to Recreation Programming for Recreation Program staff.
- Roles in Summer Inclusion Support:
 - Summer Inclusion Coordinator: Conducts intake, create plans of support and assists with programming.
 - Summer Specialized Inclusion Staff: Works 1:1 with a child that has higher support needs in summer camp, acts a mentor to other day camp and inclusion staff.
 - Summer Inclusion Staff: Works 1:1 or 2:1 with children that lower support needs.
- Of those residents who responded to the question about satisfaction with Accessibility Programming provided by the municipality (n=738), 64.9% responded that they were either satisfied (56.7%) or very satisfied (8.2%). 58.2% of respondents to the Survey responded 'Don't know/No Opinion' or did not respond to this question.

Information & Communication

1. **Increase training for municipal staff (e.g. recreation, fire, police, librarians) on how to serve/accommodate persons with disabilities – 2026 deadline**

Status: In progress

Progress:

Accessibility Advisor

2. The corporate training, *Going from Support to Inclusion: Accessibility Training* was held monthly from 2023-2024. A total of 183 staff participated in the training. Business unit participation was as follows:

- CAO: 11
 - CS: 5
 - FAM: 3
 - LLS: 1
 - HR: 12
 - HRFE: 0
 - HRP: 27 (Cadets)
 - HT: 9
 - IT: 23
 - PD: 28
 - PFE: 43
 - P&R: 12
 - PW: 13
- The Accessibility Advisor offered *Going from Support to Inclusion* sessions for individual business units/departments. Staff participation is reflected in the numbers above. Four business units received individual sessions:
 - Halifax Regional Police Cadets
 - Information Technology
 - Property, Fleet & Environment
 - Planning & Development



Transit

- 14 staff from Halifax Transit - Planning and Customer Engagement and 2 staff from Public Works – Design Services participated in a 2-hour training session with CNIB to better understand the impacts of low vision/no vision/ vision loss on navigating exterior environment infrastructure.

Public Works

- Design and Construction Services held a two-day workshop; Removing Barriers: Achieving Accessibility within Transportation Systems with approximately 20 staff members. This workshop highlighted the importance and impact of equitable transportation systems using an accessibility lens. As well as an emphasis of accessibility standards and guidelines, and best practices in accessibility pertaining to specific facility types.

Parks and Recreation

Summer Inclusion Training

Advanced Summer Inclusion training provides summer staff with the tools to support children in our HRM summer camps. Topics include: positive behaviour support, proper lifting techniques, personal care, Non Violent Crisis Intervention, Universal design of programs, Disability awareness, creating trauma sensitive programs.

- Number of casual staff through the training: approximately 40 people.

Basic Summer Inclusion training provides summer staff with the tools to support children in our HRM summer camps. Topics include: positive behaviour support, Universal design of programs, Disability awareness,

- Number of casual staff through the training: approximately 50 people (all summer staff that did not receive Advanced training).

Universal Program Design Training

This training is designed to have staff examine their current program offering with a lens of universal program design. Using real examples from the programs currently running, staff look at barriers to participation and how we can minimize those barriers to encourage participation for all.

- Number of casual staff through the training: approximately 20 people.

Learningo Training (partner organization)

This training is aimed to build skills with the people who are working directly with individuals who need additional support to be successful in the environment they work in. Participants leave this training with a toolbox of strategies that can reduce stress and open up opportunities to learn about positive behaviour supports.

- Number of casual staff through / signed up for the training (started monthly in January 2023): 40.

Information & Communication KPI

KPI Name	Value (2021-2022)	Value (2022/23 or 2022)	Value (2023/24 or 2023)	Current Trend	Desired Trend
Number of staff trained in Accessibility Training	41	75	190	UP	UP



Employment

- 1. Collect and maintain information from employment equity reports which indicates the number of individuals employed by the municipality who self-identify as having a disability - 2022 deadline**

Status: Incomplete

Progress:

- Data is collected through the hiring process via the applicant tracking system (Brass Ring) that includes candidate self-identification information from the following equity groups: African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible Persons, Women in occupations or positions where they are underrepresented in the workforce, Indigenous/Aboriginal People, Persons with Disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ Persons. The number of candidates as well as the number of hires from equity groups is reported through the *Annual Workforce Report* ([Councillor Russell - Annual Workforce Report 2022-23 - Oct 17/23 Regional Council | Halifax.ca](#)). In 2022/23 there were 638 hires from equity groups, representing 41.84 per cent of total hires.
- The status is incomplete as Human Resources does not have the technology to fully collect and report on employees who identify as having a disability. Planned technology changes within Human Resources should allow us to collect and report more accurately on this data than we are presently able to.

- 2. Establish hiring procedures that require defining accommodations for individuals with disabilities on job postings within the**

municipality, including accommodations available through the interview process (e.g. if a scribe is needed, etc.) – 2022 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

- This work remains on-going within Human Resources (Talent Acquisition Team).
- The Halifax Regional Municipality has a *Fair Hiring Policy* that is available [online](#) for candidates to review in its entirety. This policy states the following as it relates to accommodations for candidates: *“The Halifax Regional Municipality will provide accommodations during the recruitment process based on any human rights protected ground, short of undue hardship. Applicants have the right to request such an accommodation. Applicants invited to participate in an assessment process (such as an interview or testing) will be the offered the opportunity to discuss their accommodation needs with the Hiring Manager or HR Generalist. Human Resources staff will assist with any accommodation requests.”* Candidates can find additional information on halifax.ca.
- The Duty to Accommodate Policy will include both current employees and job applicants. This is a substantial document that will outline the types of accommodations that are available throughout the recruitment process as well as the process to obtain an accommodation if required.
- The Job Opportunities page on the Halifax.ca website includes a section on Accommodation ([Accommodations | Hiring | Employment |](#)



[Halifax](#)). The information contained here outlines what an accommodation is and how candidates can request an accommodation.

- Every job posting includes the following language regarding accommodation:
 - *‘During the recruitment process, applicants have the right to request an accommodation. Applicants invited to participate in an assessment process (such as an interview or testing) and who require accommodation, should discuss their needs with the Recruiter when invited to the assessment process.’*

3. Compile internal list of accommodations provided to employees with disabilities (e.g., visual, physical, neurodevelopmental, etc.) (2022-2026)

Status: In progress

Progress:

- Information regarding the accommodation process is presently available on halifax.ca.
- The Human Resources Team (Talent Acquisition) will continue to monitor and update this item as required. As work progresses on the Duty to Accommodate Policy, the website will be updated.

4. Develop a *Workplace Accommodation Policy* which outlines a formal process for providing accommodations to job candidates and employees with disabilities. – 2022 deadline

Status: In Progress

Progress:

- This work is currently underway within Human Resources. There is a project team and charter that defines the following outcomes:
 - A workplace accommodations policy and a job candidate accommodations policy;
 - Supplementary documents that will aid in fair and consistent application of the policy;
 - A tracking mechanism for employment-related accommodations.
- The policies have been reviewed by several internal partners but are not yet finalized. The anticipated completion date of this work is April 2024.

5. Establish partnerships with external partners (e.g. universities and colleges) to provide municipal work placements and internships that are available for students with disabilities – 2024 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

- In early 2023, the Human Resources Business Unit established a Talent Acquisition Team which is lead by the Manager of Talent Acquisition. They have also established two Talent Acquisition Specialists positions that will support community engagement including establishing, developing, and maintaining partnerships. As this team grows and develops capacity to engage with equity groups will increase.

6. Develop a procedure to share municipal job postings with agencies who support individuals with disabilities seeking employment – 2024 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

- Human Resources (Talent Acquisition division) has a list of approximately 24 community partners specific to the Accessibility Community as well as multiple other community partnerships.
- During every staffing plan discussion with the Hiring Manager, diversity is discussed along with advertising opportunities.
- The Talent Acquisition team has access to the full list of contacts and sends the postings to these groups as needed.

Other action items 

1. Align D&I business unit initiatives with the actions outlined in the Accessibility Strategy (2020-2030)

Status: In progress

Progress:

- Since the approval of the Strategy in May 2021, business units consider yearly goals that are specifically associated with accessibility in addition to the aforementioned diversity and inclusion (D&I) goals. This will continue to strengthen each business unit's dedication to D&I initiatives and provide additional reporting opportunities for the D&I Champions Table.

2. Establish partnership between the accessibility advisor and business units to conduct annual business unit accessibility reviews (2020-2022)

Status: Complete

Progress:

- Following the Strategy’s approval by Council, the Task Force was formed. The Accessibility Strategy Task Force meets on a quarterly basis, and subcommittees meet either monthly or bi-monthly as needed.

3. Establish dialogue between Accessibility Directorate and the municipality regarding accessibility in the Halifax region and compliance with the provincial Accessibility Act – 2028 deadline

Status: In progress

Progress:

- The Accessibility Advisor liaises with the Accessibility Directorate on a regular basis. In 2023, the Accessibility Directorate presented at an Accessibility Strategy Open House. They spoke about the work of the Accessibility Directorate and the upcoming proposed Built Environment Accessibility Standard.

Other KPIs

KPI Name	Value (2021/22 or 2021)	Value (2022/23 or 2022)	Value (2023/24 or 2023)	Current Trend	Desired Trend

Percentage completed – Accessibility Strategy action items			6.7%	N/A	UP
Percentage of the Accessibility Strategy action items on track			75%	N/A	UP

KPI Notes

- On-track deliverables are those that have completed on time or have started on time but have future deadlines.

Additional Accessibility initiatives

As part of the Strategy update meeting between the Accessibility Advisor and Task Force members, a variety of accessibility initiatives were mentioned across business units that are not captured in the action items in the Strategy but will serve to improve accessibility within the Halifax Regional Municipality, both internally and externally. This section outlines these additional accessibility initiatives and are categorized by the business unit leading the initiative.

Community Safety

- On 8 November 2023, a Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry was launched in HRM. This registry is a self referred program set up in order to assist residents of the municipality that would be most in

need during crisis events. Residents can register online, or via phone. Community outreach will continue as part of the normal cycle of public engagement.

Parks and Recreation

- Began work on pilot program to improve access to recreation programming for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. (2024-2025)

Action Items Beginning in 2024

Six action items were initiated in 2024. One falls under Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure, three under Information and Communications, two under Employment and one under Other.

- Develop system for booking accessible transportation within the Halifax region (i.e. accessible taxis, Access-A-Bus, regular bus, ferries) (2024-2030)
- Make the municipal internet and intranet websites and web content conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 format (Minimum Level AA- including job postings on Brass Ring and GIS mapping) (2024-2028)
- Ensure plain language and clear format, for all municipal communications (2024-2026)
- Update accessibility page on Halifax.ca to provide information on accessibility in the municipality (2024-2026)
- Develop corporate training which educates hiring managers about workplace accessibility (2024-2028)

- Review current hiring practices and ensure that they are providing employment to individuals with disabilities (2024-2028)
- Facilitate relationships between business units and accessibility community stakeholders (e.g., CNIB, Autism Nova Scotia, etc.) to improve information sharing regarding municipal services (2024-2030)

Conclusion

In the third year of the Strategy's implementation, the Halifax Regional Municipality was successful in staying on track to complete the highest-priority goals for the 2023/24 fiscal year. Annual updates will continue to be provided to Regional Council on the Strategy, and if needed, raise any considerations for Council in supporting the Strategy's implementation.



Appendix A: KPI Definitions

KPI Name	KPI Description	Why we measure
Percentage of accessible ramp deployable transit bus stops	<p>Percentage of Halifax Transit bus stops where accessible ramp deployment possible.</p> <p>Based on a fiscal year.</p>	<p>This measure provides high-level information about the accessibility of bus stops while accessibility audits are being conducted to confirm accessibility of stops.</p>
Percent completion of accessibility audits – Transit stops	<p>Percentage of Halifax Transit bus stops that have been audited in person to confirm accessibility.</p> <p>Based on a calendar year.</p>	<p>The percent completion of accessibility audits is reviewed to ensure progress is being made on audits which provide important information to improve accessibility.</p>
Percentage of fully accessible bus stops	<p>Percentage of fully accessible Halifax Transit bus stops (as indicated by an International Symbol of Access (wheelchair) symbol); where the ramp can be deployed, the bus stop has a concrete landing pad (minimum size 1.5 m x 2.5 m) with access to a sidewalk.</p>	<p>This measure provides the percentage of bus stops that meet Halifax Transit’s accessible standards. Auditing to confirm percentage underway.</p>

KPI Name	KPI Description	Why we measure
	Based on a fiscal year.	
Percent very satisfied or satisfied with public transit – Access-A Bus service	The percentage of Resident Survey respondents that were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” when asked to rate their satisfaction with Access-A Bus service (this number excludes those that responded “Don’t know/No Opinion”)	The percent satisfaction with Access-A Bus service is monitored to ensure that efforts to improve the Access-A Bus booking service is increasing satisfaction levels.
Percentage of accessibility audits completed - buildings	The percentage of municipal buildings that have been audited against applicable accessibility standards. Based on a fiscal year.	The percent completion of accessibility audits is reviewed to ensure progress is being made on audits which provide important information to improve accessibility.
Percentage of accessibility audits completed - playgrounds	Percentage of municipal playgrounds that have been audited in person to confirm accessibility.	The percent completion of accessibility audits is reviewed to ensure progress is being made on audits which provide important information to improve accessibility.
Percentage of municipal buildings	Percentage of municipal buildings meeting applicable accessibility standards.	This is a measure of how accessible municipal infrastructure

KPI Name	KPI Description	Why we measure
meeting accessibility standard(s)		is and provides information on how to improve accessibility.
Annual number of curb cuts built or modified meeting CSA B651	Annual number of curb cuts built /modified by Municipal Operations and the Capital Program. Based on a calendar year.	This measure is tracked to ensure continued progress on curb cuts within the municipality to allow safe and accessible travel whether rolling or walking.
Percentage of municipal beaches with accessible features	Percentage of municipal beaches with accessible features (not all inclusive): accessible parking spots with access aisle, wide paved pathway to beaches, accessible washrooms or porta potties, beach mats, accessible floatation chair or kayak/canoe dock. Based on a fiscal year.	This is a measure of how accessible municipal infrastructure is and provides information on how to improve accessibility.
Number of recreational staff available for inclusion support	The total active number of recreational staff available for inclusion support (these are staff specifically hired as inclusion support staff, specialized	This measures the municipality's capacity for accessible recreation demand.

KPI Name	KPI Description	Why we measure
	<p>inclusion support staff or inclusion coordinators)</p> <p>Based on a fiscal year.</p>	
<p>Number of staff trained – recreational inclusion support</p>	<p>The annual number of staff that have received recreational inclusion support training.</p> <p>Based on a fiscal year.</p>	<p>This measures the municipality’s capacity for accessible recreation demand.</p>
<p>Percent very satisfied or satisfied with municipal accessibility programming</p>	<p>The percentage of Resident Survey respondents that were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” when asked to rate their satisfaction with accessibility programming (this number excludes those that responded “Don’t know/No Opinion”)</p>	<p>The percent satisfaction with accessibility programming is monitored to ensure that efforts to improve accessible recreation is increasing satisfaction levels.</p>
<p>Number of staff trained in Accessibility Training</p>	<p>The annual number of municipal staff trained in corporate Accessibility training.</p> <p>Based on a fiscal year.</p>	<p>This is tracked to ensure the municipality is actively training staff on how to serve and accommodate persons with disabilities.</p>

KPI Name	KPI Description	Why we measure
Percentage completed – Accessibility Strategy action items	The total number of action items completed as a percentage of all original Accessibility Strategy action items. Based on a fiscal year.	This is monitored to ensure the Accessibility Strategy is progressing.
Percentage of the Accessibility Strategy action items on-track	The total number of action items that are on-track as a percentage of all original Accessibility Strategy action items scheduled to start by the current fiscal year.	This is monitored to ensure the Accessibility Strategy is progressing as scheduled.