



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 15.5.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**July 9, 2024**

**TO:** Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed

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Mayor Mike Savage, Chair, Executive Standing Committee

**DATE:** June 17, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Governance Review – Phase 1 Implementation Plan and Advisory Committee Review**

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**ORIGIN**

June 17, 2024 meeting of Executive Standing Committee, Item 13.1.1.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated May 24, 2024.

Executive Standing Committee – Terms of Reference  
General Governance of the Council

8. The Executive Standing Committee shall act as a review committee for matters related to the general self-governance and administration of the Council as directed by the Council.

**RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Prepare amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Active Transportation Advisory Committee and Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee, as outlined in Attachment 2 of the staff report dated May 24, 2024 and return to Council with the proposed amendments for Council's consideration;
2. Commence the process to dissolve the Community Design Advisory Committee, Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee, Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council Planning Advisory Committee, Investment Policy Advisory Committee, Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee, Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee, North West Planning Advisory Committee, Regional Watershed Advisory Committee, and Western Common Advisory Committee, and to return to Council with the necessary amendments to dissolve these committees;
3. Prepare amendments to Administrative Order 48, the Community Council Administrative Order, relating to the creation of Planning Advisory Committees, as outlined in the staff report dated May 24, 2024 and return to Council with the proposed amendments for Council's consideration; and
4. Complete the remaining phases of the governance review implementation plan, as outlined in Attachment 3 of the staff report dated May 24, 2024.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Executive Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated May 24, 2024 to consider the Governance Review – Phase 1 Implementation Plan and Advisory Committee Review.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated May 24, 2024.

## **DISCUSSION**

Executive Standing Committee considered the staff report dated May 24, 2024 and approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated May 24, 2024.

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated May 24, 2024.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Meetings of the Executive Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated May 24, 2024.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated May 24, 2024.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated May 24, 2024.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated May 24, 2024.

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

Report Prepared by:       Catie Campbell, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 782-641-0796

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P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 13.1.1**  
**Executive Standing Committee**  
**June 17, 2024**

**TO:** Mayor and Members of Executive Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 24, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Governance Review – Phase 1 Implementation Plan and Advisory Committee Review**

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**ORIGIN**

**June 20, 2023 Regional Council motion (Item No. 16.1)**

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Lovelace

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to review and provide recommendations on:

1. All boards, committees and commissions that include citizen volunteers, in an effort to reduce duplication, close gaps and increase efficiencies and resources optimization, and;
2. All standing committees of council, looking at the terms of reference, especially their duties, responsibilities, administration, and procedures, looking for improvements, efficiencies, and work that flows to Council.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

**June 17, 2021 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee motion (Item No. 13.1)**

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Smith

THAT Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request a staff report regarding possible options and opportunities to create an HRM-wide Parks Advisory Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

**January 22, 2024 Executive Standing Committee motion (Item No. 14.1)**

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT the Executive Standing Committee request the Chief Administrative Officer provide a staff report regarding potential adoption of changes to the committee's terms of reference to amend section 10 to add Community Safety and broaden the committee's responsibility to include oversight of strategic planning and direction for these business units, in line with other Standing Committee terms of reference.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, 2008 SNS c 39* provides:

Section 20(1) The Council may make policies...(b) regulating its own proceedings and preserving order at meetings of the Council; (c) providing for committees and conferring powers and duties upon them, except the power to expend funds;...

Section 21(1) Council may establish standing, special and advisory committees.

Section 21(2) Each committee shall perform the duties conferred on it by this Act, and any other Act of the Legislature or the by-laws or policies of the Municipality.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Prepare amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Active Transportation Advisory Committee and Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee, as outlined in Attachment 2 of this report, and return to Council with the proposed amendments for Council's consideration;
2. Commence the process to dissolve the Community Design Advisory Committee, Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee, Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council Planning Advisory Committee, Investment Policy Advisory Committee, Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee, Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee, North West Planning Advisory Committee, Regional Watershed Advisory Committee, and Western Common Advisory Committee, and to return to Council with the necessary amendments to dissolve these committees.
3. Prepare amendments to Administrative Order 48, the *Community Council Administrative Order*, relating to the creation of Planning Advisory Committees, as outlined in this report, and return to Council with the proposed amendments for Council's consideration; and
4. Complete the remaining phases of the governance review implementation plan, as outlined in Attachment 3 of this report.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report examines the current state of HRM's Agencies, Boards and Committees/Commissions (ABCs). It attempts to establish an intentional process for ABCs that the HRM supports and invites robust public participation, that meets the expectations of Regional Council and presents a meaningful role in the decision-making process for ABCs supported by the municipality. In doing so, this governance review seeks to establish an approach to HRM's ABCs which is responsive to the evolving needs of the Municipality and the public.

In June of 2023, Halifax Regional Council directed staff to undertake a review of Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM) ABC's as well as Standing Committees to examine the decision-making process of the Municipality. This work is complex as it impacts the work of Regional Council and staff, but also concerns how the public engages with HRM's decision-making process. This report evaluates the landscape of municipal governance in the HRM, focusing on the role and effectiveness of its various internal ABCs. It recognizes the importance of public participation in the decision-making processes and has attempted to emphasize the need for meaningful influence for the governance bodies that are supported by the organization.

The review highlights the increase in the number of internal ABCs over the past decade, alongside advancements in HRM's internal capabilities, technical expertise, and public engagement programs. It also identifies the logistical challenges, coordination issues, resource allocation and overlapping Terms of Reference (TOR) between ABC's individually and with the explicit expectations of municipal staff.

Amendments made to the *HRM Charter* in 2022, introduced through the passing of Bill 137, have impacted the roles and operations of a number of HRM's ABCs, particularly as they relate to planning matters. This report discusses the effects of this legislative change on the decision-making process as well as highlights the outcomes of previous governance reviews. It includes information specific to consultations with council members and staff relating to the governance review process.

The report outlines the scope and methodology of the governance review, including consultations with staff and volunteer committee members. The report underscores the need to realign the committee landscape with HRM's evolving needs and goals, aiming to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and public engagement in decision-making processes. As a result of this review, the report contains recommendations to review and amend TOR for specific ABCs, as well as suggestions to dissolve certain committees where their scope of work has been fulfilled, satisfied with the evolving landscape of HRM staff responsibilities or become redundant. In addition, the report recommends a phased approach to complete the entirety of the governance review process.

## **BACKGROUND**

The inclusion of public participation and feedback in the decision-making process is a distinguishing feature of municipal government in Canada and ensures that policies and initiatives are reflective of the diverse needs and perspectives within the community. Within the HRM public participation is embedded within many business processes and can be demonstrated in many formal ways. The municipality's various ABCs play a role within the governance structure of the HRM, intended to serve as channels for participation and feedback from members of the community.

The evolving landscape of HRM governance has led to the establishment of 21 internal ABC's, (Attachment 1). Additionally, there are 14 external ABC's with public and/or councillor appointments that are managed and supported by the Clerk's Office. These numbers exclude HRM's 4 Community Councils and 6 Standing Committees. This represents a substantial increase in the number of HRM's ABCs over the past decade.

This growth has coincided with several internal developments in business practices and capabilities, such as an increase in HRM's internal staff expertise, utilization of technology for public engagement, as well as the creation of more robust public participation programs within HRM's decision-making processes. This has led to complexities and challenges that necessitate a comprehensive review of the role of ABC's within the governance process at the HRM.

The growth in the number of internal ABCs, while indicative of a culture of civic participation, has presented logistical challenges in terms of coordination, resource allocation, and streamlined communication both to and through the committee system. The intricate web of ABCs has, at times, led to overlapping mandates and duplication, creating confusion for members of Council, the public, and staff.

It is important to recognize that the effectiveness of these ABCs hinges on more than just their existence. Meaningful influence, embedded within the process, must be granted to these bodies to truly serve their purpose.

## **DISCUSSION**

The work that is done by ABCs within the HRM provides an important mechanism for engagement in the decision-making process and, depending on the committee type, critical and formally required processes that HRM staff must follow for policy development. The process, as well as resources required to support the large number of internal ABCs in the HRM, is considerable.

Significant staff time is committed by Business Units across the organization in support of these ABCs, with each generally having a dedicated staff liaison. These staff liaisons are responsible for agenda item management and report development as well as coordinating additional resource support depending on the agenda topics that come forward. The need for specialized support, such as Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) teams, environmental staff and legal experts, has become more pronounced as committees address increasingly diverse and complex issues. This also represents significant volunteer capital, sometimes with limited potential for influence. Internal ABCs are primarily coordinated and supported by the Clerk's Office, including the managing of meeting logistics, documentation, and ensuring adherence to Terms of Reference (TOR).

Many ABCs are operating with a very limited scope of work and influence under their TOR's as compared to their original role. A main impact legislatively to ABCs has been [Bill 137](#). Approved by the Nova Scotia Government in April 2022, Bill 137 introduced amendments to the *HRM Charter* which suspend referral of planning matters to advisory committees for a period of three years. The suspension of referral imposed by Bill 137 is in effect until April 22, 2025. This has resulted in some ABCs being put on pause, while others meet rarely as their TORs are primarily planning focused. The impacts of Bill 137 on the work of ABCs can be contrasted with its impacts operationally on staff's ability to advance work through HRM's decision-making process. Other ABC's have seen their roles change due to the natural evolution of their TOR's. Many TORs include specific project based work that, when completed, fundamentally leave ABC without ability to inform or influence. This has left some ABC's only formal role as one of being merely informed or notified of issues. This is problematic for volunteers who want to provide more tangible service to the community.

The last comprehensive review of HRM's Governance system was conducted and implemented over a five-year period from 2009-2013. The main result of this review was the creation of a Standing Committee (SC) system and reporting structure for each of its associated advisory ABCs. The SC system was adopted out of several governance reviews dating back to the amalgamation of the former municipal units of Dartmouth, Halifax, Bedford, and Halifax County in 1996 and is a formal recommendation from the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board's (NSUARB) 2009 District Boundary Decision. In moving to a SC system, Council cited the need to reduce the number and complexity of ABCs, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Council decision-making, bring strategic council focus to well defined policy and program areas, fill in policy development gaps, and provide accountability and oversight to ABCs. Since that time, HRM's SCs have evolved to include public participation as a standing item on each meeting agenda, the requirement for formal agenda setting meetings, and greater accountability and process documentation for external presentation requests.

The municipal council decision making process is relatively similar amongst Canadian municipalities, but each are unique to their communities. It is common for Community Council and SCs to be utilized as committees of Council. It is also common practice that the municipality acts a central appointment body for various committees including external groups. While numbers vary across jurisdictions, most jurisdictions have 11 to 16 Committees that would be considered a Committee of Council, including Community Councils and Standing Committees. The HRM has a much higher threshold of committees it is responsible for supporting than many Canadian municipalities of similar size.

The current review of ABCs is an opportunity to realign the committee landscape with the municipality's goals, addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by growth and complexity. As can be seen in Attachment 2, some ABCs have never been reviewed or have only had minor modifications to their TORs since they were adopted. The motion of Council passed on June 20, 2023, provides an opportunity to review and amend, if necessary, SC and ABC TORs to better enable their intended purpose to provide strategic counsel on policy and program development, and streamline ABC's and their reporting relationships. It also provides an opportunity to review which ABCs have met the end of their mandates or their original purpose. A governance review is a large undertaking. This report deals with Phase 1 with a primary focus on specific ABCs and the implementation plan for future phases of this governance review (Attachment 3).

## **1. Governance Review: Scope and Methodology**

An inventory of ABCs and an analysis of their current state was undertaken as part of Phase 1 of this review (Attachment 1). Following the inventory, several ABCs were marked as out of scope for the following reasons: they are legislatively required, they have a clear mandate and are fulfilling their intended roles, and/or they are external to HRM.

ABCs out of scope for Phase 1 include:

- Community Councils;
- Standing Committees;
- Board of Police Commissioners;
- Design Review Committee;
- Grants Committee;
- Heritage Advisory Committee;
- License Appeal Committee;
- Lived Experience Committees – Accessibility Advisory Committee, African Descent Advisory Committee, Women's Advisory Committee, and Youth Advisory Committee
- Special Events Advisory Committee; and
- All External Committees including Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM).

While out of scope for Phase 1, there may be future recommendations to update the TOR, meeting procedures, and/or processes related to appointments for these ABCs as a part of subsequent reviews. Attachment 3 outlines the implementation plan for future work.

## **2. Phase 1 ABC Overviews**

This report covers Phase 1 of the Implementation plan and includes a review of 11 committees as follows:

- Active Transportation Advisory Committee;
- Community Design Advisory Committee;
- Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee;
- Harbour East-Marine Drive Planning Advisory;
- Investment Policy Advisory Committee;
- Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee;
- North West Planning Advisory Committee;
- Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee;
- Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee;
- Regional Watershed Advisory Board; and
- Western Common Advisory Committee.

These ABCs were included as circumstances have changed through impacts of provincial legislation, increased internal staff expertise/capacity, changes to public consultation, and/or where concerns have



been raised about TOR and mandates from staff and committee members. The review of these ABCs was broken out into three components:

1. ABC origin and historical review, review of TORs and assessment of agendas;
2. Business Unit Consultations; and
3. ABC Member Consultations

See Attachment 2 for a full overview and assessment of these ABCs. The community engagement section of this report provides an overview of the Business Unit and ABC member consultations.

### **3. Recommendations**

The result of this review has been broken down into two recommendations: review and amend TOR or commence the process to dissolve the committee. A summary of recommendations is provided below. An overview and detailed evaluation of these ABC's is provided in Attachment 2.

#### ***Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) - Recommendation: Review and amend TOR***

It is recommended that ATAC remain an active committee following a review and updating of its current TOR. The Active Transportation Priorities Plan is nearing completion and ATAC can help staff complete work associated with this plan and assist with the development of the next plan, anticipated for 2025-26.

To provide better clarity for members and staff, ATAC's TOR should be amended to reflect this key element of their work and to remove the elements of their mandate that are outdated, as outlined in Attachment 2. This would leave ATAC with two main activities:

1. The Committee will provide advice to staff on matters relating to active transportation as part of the development and implementation of an updates to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP); and
2. The Committee will provide timely advice to staff on matters relating to infrastructure projects, education and promotion, and other active transportation policies that may arise.

As part of the conclusion of the current IMP and adoption of the next plan, an assessment of ATAC's TOR and the committee itself should be conducted.

#### ***Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee (PPPAC) - Recommendation: Review and amend TOR***

It is recommended that PPPAC remain an active committee following a review and update of its TOR. The Committee is serving a purpose through public awareness via their meetings, have a long-standing historical role as a committee, are a useful consulting body for staff, and provide a level of due diligence. The review of the TOR and agenda items outline PPPAC is mainly providing input to staff. The 2008 Master Plan, adopted by Council, is the main policy directing future work related to the park and is actioned by staff, not the committee. Many of the duties outlined in the TOR require updating to ensure accuracy and remove outdated items (ceremonial functions) or items that are completed by staff and provide clarity that the committee's main role is advisory to staff.

#### ***Western Common Advisory Committee (WCAC) - Recommendation: Commence the process to dissolve***

It is recommended that staff commence the process to dissolve the WCAC. While staff saw a positive use of a similar committee as part of the development of the Western Common Wilderness Master Plan, adopted by Council on June 15, 2010, there is an insufficient role and purpose for the Committee in monitoring staff's implementation of the Master Plan. Additionally, the limited role of WCAC has been

hampered by the impacts of Bill 137. This has resulted in challenges at the committee level and concern from staff regarding items to bring to these meetings, other than current updates. Finally, Clerk’s Office staff have found it challenging to recruit members for this committee. For example, the most recent WCAC recruitment in the Fall of 2023 saw an insufficient number of applicants to fill the available committee positions. For these reasons, the advice from staff in 2015, when the creation of a committee was being contemplated, remains that the ongoing implementation of the Western Common Master Plan does not warrant a Committee of Council, as it is a long-range project with a rate of development which can be met through community consultation as needed.

**Regional Watershed Advisory Committee (RWAB) - Recommendation: Commence the process to dissolve**

It is recommended that staff commence the process to dissolve the RWAB. The needs and capabilities of the Municipality have evolved considerably since the inception of RWAB and continue to evolve even since the last fulsome assessment complete in 2019, where the staff recommendation was also to commence the process to dissolve the Committee. There are various mechanisms for public engagement, ability to access specialized consultation or engagement when required through external organizations, adequate coverage of RWAB’s existing mandate through staff expertise and Council approved policies (such as Green Network Plan, Regional Plan, and HalifACT), and use of environment and Sustainability Standing Committee and North West Community Council to ensure diligence on water resource management and related issues. The amendment process for RWAB will include a process to amend the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and all applicable municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws referencing the RWAB and may include amendments to applicable Development Agreements.

**Planning Advisory Committees - Recommendation: Commence the process to dissolve**

It is recommended that staff commence the process to dissolve all PACs. These committees have been heavily impacted by Bill 137 and the ability to refer planning recommendations to planning and other advisory committees is suspended until April 22, 2025. Prior to Bill 137, these PACs dealt with various planning applicants as required under their terms of reference.

A summary is included in the below table.

<b>Planning Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Staff Support Model</b>	<b>Status</b>
Halifax Peninsula PAC	Municipal Clerk’s Office	Suspended due to Bill 137
Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council PAC (for the lands at 651 Portland Hills Drive Dartmouth)	Planning & Development	Staff confirmed mandate is complete.
Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee	Planning & Development	Small portion is included by the Provincial Special Planning Area.  Developer requested that the lands be considered for inclusion with the Urban Service Area and consequently, Phases 2 and 3 are expected to be considered as part of Phase 5 of the Regional Plan Review project.
North West PAC	Municipal Clerk’s Office	Suspended due to Bill 137

<b>Planning Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Staff Support Model</b>	<b>Status</b>
Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee	Planning & Development	Staff confirmed mandated is complete.

In addition, staff are also recommending that Administrative Order 48 be amended to remove the ability for a Community Council to create PACs and repeal the standard terms of reference in Schedule 3. These recommendations are being put for several reasons. First, due to the impact of Bill 137, PACs have not been meeting since 2022, with their mandates suspended until at least 2025. Even prior to Bill 137, however, staff have noted the questionable utility of PACs as part of the planning review process. As part of the staff consultations conducted for this governance review, staff indicated that, since Bill 137 has been in place, there has been no significant impacts to the planning process and staff have seen efficiency in the streamlined process. On a balance of considerations, staff do not believe that the significant time and resources which went into supporting PACs, when they were able to meet, were justified by the limited impacts PACs had on shaping outcomes in the HRM decision-making process. Additionally, enhanced public engagement practices are now in place with the adoption of the new Administrative Order for Public Engagement. This has made the role of PACs increasingly redundant as a means of incorporating the public point of view in the planning review process.

***Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC) - Recommendation: Commences the process to dissolve***

CDAC has not met since summer 2021 and was specifically required for the development and implementation of the first five-year review of the Regional Plan (RP+5) and the Centre Plan Project. Both projects have been completed, so the committee has reached the end of its mandate. The public participation program for the current Regional Plan Review project has been approved by Regional Council and does not require a committee. Consequently, it is recommended that staff commence the process to dissolve CDAC.

***Investment Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) - Recommendation: Commence the process to dissolve***

It is recommended that staff commence the process to dissolve IPAC. The current investment policy is working for HRM and staff have measures in place to ensure there is oversight on the policy outside of IPAC through the quarterly Treasurer’s Report that is sent to Audit and Finance Standing Committee. An Investment Policy is required under the HRM Charter and staff cannot make an investing decision that is outside of the policy. Further, the Investment Policy requires a no-risk stance to investing to meet objectives and its adherence is reviewed by the Audit and Finance Standing Committee and Regional Council. The rigorous process associated with the Investment Policy provides oversight of staff investing activities, but also inherently limits the influence of a committee as HRM’s Investment Policy, outside of minor adjustments, is effectively set. While a committee may have been useful in establishing a policy during the change of investment strategy in 1998, it is no longer required as the initial review body can be adjusted to refer to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee.

**4. HRM-wide Parks Advisory Committee**

On June 17, 2021 the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee passed a motion requesting a staff report regarding possible options and opportunities to create an HRM-wide Parks Advisory Committee.

There are four committees that relate to parks:

1. The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee (PPPAC)
2. The Western Common Wilderness Common Advisory Committee (WCAC);
3. The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC); and
4. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED)

The PPPAC and WCWC were established in 1997 and 2016 respectively following the completion of park master plans. While the establishment of an advisory committee following the completion of a master plan can guide implementation, this is not a structure that is recommended moving forward. As needed, committees can be considered for the implementation of certain park plans when such processes warrant and are largely subject to business and budget plans.

HRM's capacity to undertake targeted engagements on park-related items brought forward to Council and in-house staff expertise has increased significantly in recent years. For example, the Halifax Common Master Plan, adopted by Council on January 23, 2024, was created through extensive public engagement and did not involve an implementation or advisory committee.

For parks without an advisory committee, staff generally receive ongoing input from the public or through community organizations such as a "Friends of" group who correspond with staff and members of Council as needed.

Finally, there is the current role of the Standing Committees. The Terms of Reference of ESSC includes parks and open spaces to ensure there is an appropriate policy structure for environmental protection of these spaces. The Terms of Reference of CPED includes community building initiatives in the areas of arts, culture, recreation and heritage and related facility strategies, which is relevant as much of the municipal focus on parks relates to parks as spaces for recreation. Phase 2 of the Governance Implementation Plan will review Standing Committee Terms of Reference and they can be adjusted or strengthened as needed to ensure there are no gaps and provide clarity between Standing Committees where it comes to park oversight.

As part of the review of the existing ABCs, it is not recommended that advisory committees specific to individual parks be continued. It is recommended that public engagement continue through master park planning processes, and that parks be considered for all their benefits and purposes (environmental/ecological, recreation/leisure, social, and sport) during Phase 2 of the Governance Implementation Plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Council approval of these recommendations would clarify and conclude the work of some ABCs. This would create limited financial savings to the Municipality. Some savings could be seen in staff time for staff liaisons and Clerk's Office staff supporting the meetings, however, this is not expected to be a large savings as some ABCs are not meeting presently and others are meeting only as required.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

The status quo is presenting significant risks in the areas of efficiencies, staff time, and volunteer engagement and experience. This review has identified the need for change and the recommendations are intended to lead to improvements and clarification for the ABCs that remain. For the ABCs recommended to be dissolved, it is being done in a response to changes in circumstances that have led to a reduced or end of mandate for the committee as it is currently comprised.

Additionally, there are challenges associated with the large number of ABCs that HRM presently has. This can be seen with challenges in booking or rescheduling meetings and staff's understanding of the current governance structure.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### *Staff Consultations*

Staff undertook targeted internal engagements across the organization with staff who have been identified as frequent users of HRM's ABCs. These engagements sought to ensure that the feedback gathered is reflective of the different areas of governance and categorization of ABCs. The consultations were undertaken via interviews, to gain insight into staff's experiences engaging with and advancing work through ABCs. This includes identifying pain points, inefficiencies and redundancies with the current structure and processes, as well as a desired state going forward. The full results of this analysis have been prepared and included in a private and confidential information report to maintain anonymity and keep responses confidential.

### *ABC Current Volunteer Survey*

Through Narrative Research, a survey was provided to all 91 volunteers of HRM's active committees. Responses were received from 51 individuals. Generally, members are satisfied with their work and most members indicated they intend to continue serving on their respective committee. However, despite the general satisfaction, one-third of committee members felt dissatisfied with the impact of their work on municipal decision making or influence, and satisfaction among planning-related committees appears to be lower compared to other committees. The full results of this survey have been prepared and included in Attachment 4.

### *Councillor Consultations – 2022 District Boundary Consultations*

In 2022, a review of HRM's governance structure was conducted as part of the first phase of the NSUARB's District Boundary Review process. The results of those consultations acknowledged that some members of Council felt that there may be too many internal HRM ABCs and concerns were expressed around their roles and purpose. Other feedback provided, acknowledged that while there may be questions around the productivity of various ABCs, there is value in providing a mechanism for members of the public to engage in the HRM decision making process. Concerns were also expressed of if ABCs should be required to follow the formal meeting procedures that Council, Community Councils and Standing Committees are required to use and/or if they need to be formal Committees of Council or if another format should be considered. These are items that staff will explore further in Phase 2 of the governance review. Finally, the results provided general comments around the role of the committee including interest in understanding what feedback the ABC provided to staff when committees are consulted on items, the need for staff to engage with relevant ABCs earlier in the process instead of at the end for feedback or input, and understand where ABCs fit and feed into the Regional Council process in terms of relationship and hierarchy.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Should Executive Stading Committee or Regional Council wish to assess alternatives for consideration of these ABCs in the future, those are included below, however the status quo is not recommended even as a contemplated alternative based on the results of the review and any alternatives not contemplated below should not be considered until a supplementary staff report is provided.

1. Defeat recommendation 3, which would result in staff not pursuing amendments to Administrative Order 48, the *Community Council Administrative Order*, relating to the creation of Planning Advisory Committees.

2. Amend recommendation 1 to begin the process to dissolve the Active Transportation Advisory Committee or the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee and return to Council with the necessary amendments. This is not recommended.
3. Amend recommendation 2 to remove Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee, Investment Policy Advisory Committee, North West Planning Advisory Committee, Regional Watershed Advisory Board, and/or Western Common Advisory Committee. This would have the effect of maintaining the current status quo for any number of committees which is not recommended. Executive Standing Committee or Regional Council could also request a staff report reviewing their Terms of Reference and proposing any necessary amendments.

*Note: The following have not been included in alternative 3, as they have reached end of mandate: Community Design Advisory Committee, Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council Planning Advisory Committee, Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee, and Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee.*

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – ABC Inventory

Attachment 2 – Committee Assessments

Attachment 3 – Governance Review Implementation Plan

Attachment 4 – Narrative Research Volunteer Survey Results

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

Report Prepared by:      Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk, Legal & Legislative Services 902.490.4210  
                                     Laura Lewis, Deputy Clerk Council & Committee Services, Legal & Legislative Services  
                                     Paul Johnston, Managing Director, Government Relations & External Affairs (GREA)  
                                     David Perusse, Intergovernmental Policy Strategist, GREA

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#	Name	Category	Created	Composition	Terms of Reference	Mandate	Status	Clerk Supported
1	Accessibility Advisory Committee	Lived Experience	1-Jul-96	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">Administrative Order 2017-005-GOV, Respecting the Advisory Committee on Accessibility in the Halifax Regional Municipality   Halifax.ca</a>	The Advisory Committee on Accessibility in HRM (formerly called the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities) was established by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality in July 1996. The Committee was formed to provide advice to Regional Council on facilitating and promoting the access of all residents to their community, including municipal government, programs and services.	Active	Yes
2	Active Transportation Advisory Committee	Special Interest	14-Nov-06	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">Council TOR - atactermsreferenc e.pdf (halifax.ca)</a>	The mandate of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee is to advise the Transportation Standing Committee on all matters relating to active transportation in Halifax Regional Municipality, using the Active Transportation Plan as a guide.	Active	Yes
3	African Descent Advisory Committee	Lived Experience	18-Oct-22	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">Administrative Order 2021-004-GOV, Respecting the African Descent Advisory Committee   Halifax.ca</a>	To advise the Municipality on the impact of municipal policies, programs and services for People of African Descent.	Active	Yes
4	Board of Police Commissioners	Required by Legislation	22-Feb-96	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">By-law P-100</a>	The Halifax Board of Police Commissioners provides civilian governance and oversight for the Halifax Regional Police on behalf of Regional Council. The Board also functions as a Police Advisory Board to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax District as it performs contractual policing services within the Halifax Regional Municipality.	Active	Yes
5	Community Design Advisory Committee	Planning	4-Oct-11	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">Council TOR Community Design Advisory Committee Terms of Reference   Halifax.ca</a>	The Community Design Advisory Committee advises the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee on the development and implementation of the Regional Plan Five Year Review and the Centre Plan Project.	Mandate complete	Yes

#	Name	Category	Created	Composition	Terms of Reference	Mandate	Status	Clerk Supported
6	Design Review Committee	Planning	24-Oct-09	Public	<a href="#">DowntownHalifax_LUB.pdf</a>	The Design Review Committee serves the Downtown Halifax Land Use Bylaw area. The principal roles of the Design Review Committee are to review site plan approval applications for substantive site plan approval, and consider whether or to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application based on the requirements and consistency with the Design Manual, in addition to advising Council on potential amendments to regulation and policy relating to the Downtown Halifax Land Use Bylaw Area.	Active	Yes
7	Grants Committee	Financial	19-Feb-08	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">Council TOR</a>	The Grants Committee reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations to Regional Council regarding annual cash grants, property tax exemptions, less than market value property leases to registered non-profit organizations and charities	Active	Yes
8	Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee	Planning	10-Jun-13	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">HPPAC Terms of Reference</a>	The Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee advises Halifax and West Community Council on planning strategies, land use by-laws and development applications for a specific area within the Halifax peninsula as described in the Terms of Reference. The committee also holds public meetings associated with municipal planning strategy amendment applications as deemed necessary.	Suspended - Provincial Legislation	Yes
9	Harbour East - Marine Drive Community Council Planning Advisory Committee	Planning	8-Jun-17	Public	<a href="#">PAC HEMDCC TOR</a>	Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council approved the formation of a Planning Advisory Committee to consider an application for a mixed-use development, by development agreement, at 651 Portland Hills Drive, Dartmouth.	Suspended - Provincial Legislation	No
10	Heritage Advisory Committee	Required by Legislation	17-Aug-96	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">HRM By-law H-200</a>	The Heritage Advisory Committee advises Regional Council on matters relating to heritage buildings and streetscapes.	Active	Yes
11	Investment Policy Advisory Committee	Financial	14-Jul-98	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">HRM TOR</a>	The Investment Policy Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee regarding investment policy, and provides ongoing monitoring of investment activities.	Active	Yes
12	License Appeal Committee	Required by Legislation	22-Sep-20	Public	<a href="#">By-law T-1000, Schedule C</a>	To hear appeals under By-Law T-1000, Respecting the Regulation of Taxis, Accessible Taxis, Limousines, and Transportation Network Companies.	Active	Yes



#	Name	Category	Created	Composition	Terms of Reference	Mandate	Status	Clerk Supported
13	Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee	Planning	13-Sep-21	Public	<a href="#">Sub committee of NWPAC - PAC TOR</a>	To advise the NWPAC by preparing a report/summary with respect to the development proposal for the Margeson Drive Master Plan Project	Suspended - Provincial Legislation	No
14	North West Planning Advisory Committee	Planning	22-Apr-13	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">NWCC - PAC TOR</a>	The North West Planning Advisory Committee advises North West Community Council regarding planning documents and planning matters within a specific area of the municipality. The committee also holds public meetings associated with municipal planning strategy amendment applications as deemed necessary.	Suspended - Provincial Legislation	Yes
15	Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee	Special Interest	25-Mar-97	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">Council TOR Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee Terms of Reference - HRM (halifax.ca)</a>	The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee advises Halifax and West Community Council about planning and management of Point Pleasant Park.	Active	Yes
16	Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee	Planning	2014	Public	<a href="#">Port Wallace Terms of Reference</a>	The Port Wallace Public Participation Committee was formed to guide the preparation of the Planning Documents for the Port Wallace Secondary Planning Strategy. This includes amendments to the Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law, the Regional Subdivision By-law and any amendments needed to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to carry out the Port Wallace Secondary Planning Strategy as directed by Halifax Regional Municipality Council.	Suspended - Provincial Legislation	No
17	Regional Watersheds Advisory Board	Planning	19-Feb-13	Public	<a href="#">Council TOR Regional Watersheds Advisory Board Terms of Reference - Amended Nov 23/21   Halifax.ca</a>	The Regional Watersheds Advisory Board advises the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee with respect to watershed management.	Active	Yes

#	Name	Category	Created	Composition	Terms of Reference	Mandate	Status	Clerk Supported
18	Special Events Advisory Committee	Financial	10-Nov-15	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">AO 2014-020-GOV</a>	The Special Events Advisory Committee makes recommendations to Regional Council regarding applications for funding for large-scale special events within the municipality that support and generate economic and tourism development, pursuant to the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV.	Active	Yes
19	Western Common Advisory Committee	Special Interest	31-May-16	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">AO 2016-001-GOV</a>	The Western Common Advisory Committee makes recommendations to Halifax and West Community Council about the development and operation of the Western Common	Active	Yes
20	Women's Advisory Committee	Lived Experience	26-Nov-19	Councillors & Public	<a href="#">AO 2019-004-GOV</a>	To support the creation of a gender inclusive municipality and provide advice to Council on matters relevant to the municipal mandate.	Active	Yes
21	Youth Advisory Committee	Lived Experience	16-Jan-18	Public	<a href="#">AO 2017-011-GOV</a>	The Youth Advisory Committee advises and assists Regional Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on how municipal policies, programs, and services affect youth, and challenge the areas where we can do better.	Active	Yes

## Attachment 2 – Committee Assessments

### 1. Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)

ATAC was created following the adoption of the Active Transportation Functional Plan by Regional Council on November 14, 2006, with the associated staff report indicating that “to successfully implement the Active Transportation Plan, staff will require the support of an advisory committee”. The existing Bikeways Advisory Committee mandate was recommended be expanded to an ATAC to advise staff on infrastructure, policies and programs pertaining to all modes of non-motorized transportation. On May 13, 2008, Regional Council passed a motion dissolving the Bikeways Advisory Committee and approving the Terms of Reference (“ToR”) for ATAC.

ATAC’s ToR have been reviewed and amended over the years. In 2011, minor amendments were made relating to the composition of the committee and the reporting relationship with the introduction of Standing Committees. A more holistic review of ATAC was conducted in 2015, which resulted in the expansion of ATAC’s mandate to include providing advice, feedback and guidance on matters related to active transportation to HRM staff, when requested, a composition change to include a representative that promotes walkability, as well as a requirement that an annual report be provided to the Transportation Standing Committee. The 2015 review found that ATAC played an important role in the development of the Active Transportation Priorities Plan 2014-2019 which was approved by Regional Council in September 2014<sup>1</sup> and replaced the 2006 Active Transportation Functional Plan. The Active Transportation Priorities Plan 2014-2019 was extended to 2023-24 as part of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) approved Regional Council on December 5, 2017. Most recently the Terms of Reference were amended in 2019 to reduce the Councillor composition on the committee from three to one.

Below is an overview of ATAC’s current mandate, as per its ToR, along with Staff’s assessment.

ATAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
1. The committee will provide timely advice to the Transportation Standing Committee on matters relating to budget, infrastructure, education, policy and public awareness.	The Committee provides advice on matters relating to infrastructure, education, policy and public awareness. Staff have a process for taking forward projects in the planning stages as an engagement tool.  Staff did not feel the Committee played a role in budget which, if the ToR were reviewed, should be removed in the future.
2. The Committee will provide support to HRM staff on education, and promotion related to active transportation, and any assistance required of an annual Bike Week.	Staff advised that Bike Week no longer happens. If the ToR were reviewed, this should be removed.
3. The Committee will provide advice, feedback and guidance to HRM staff on matters related to active transportation submitted to the Committee by HRM staff.	Staff agreed that this is accurate.
4. The Committee will prepare and submit annually to the Transportation Standing Committee, an annual Activity Report outlining the work and achievements of the Committee, particularly in regards to the Active Transportation Plan	Through the Clerk’s Office, a summary of annual meetings is provided to the Transportation Standing Committee. <sup>2</sup>  Business Unit staff / staff liaison is not involved; the report is not directly tied to achievements of the Committee or the Active Transportation Plan.

<sup>1</sup> <https://legacycontent.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/151208ca1421.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/230518tscinfoitem2.pdf>

ATAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
	If the ToR were reviewed, should be removed or adjusted to reflect current state.
5. The Committee will perform such other duties as directed by the Transportation Standing Committee.	This does not occur regularly in practice. Under Administrative Order 1, the Transportation Standing Committee can always refer an item to ATAC for consideration without this statement being included in the ToR.  If the ToR were reviewed, should be reviewed to determine if it is necessary to include.

It is recommended that ATAC remain an active committee following a review and updating of its current ToR. The Active Transportation Priorities Plan in its current form is nearing completion and ATAC can be utilized by staff to help complete work associated with this plan as well as assist with the development of the next plan, anticipated for 2025-26.

To provide better clarity for members and staff, ATAC’s ToR should be amended to reflect this key element of their work and to remove the elements of their mandate that are outdated. This would leave ATAC with two main activities:

1. The Committee will provide advice to staff on matters relating to active transportation as part of the development and implementation of an updates to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP); and
2. The Committee will provide timely advice to staff on matters relating to infrastructure projects, education and promotion, and other active transportation policies that may arise.

As part of the conclusion of the current IMP and adoption of the next plan, an assessment of ATAC’s ToR and the committee itself should be conducted.

**2. Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee (PPPAC)**

Prior to amalgamation, there was a Point Pleasant Park Commission, which was responsible for park management with funding provided by the former City of Halifax. The *Amalgamation Act* disbanded many former Boards and Committees, including the Point Pleasant Park Commission. At amalgamation, management of Point Pleasant Park was transferred to HRM staff. The PPPAC was created by Regional Council on March 25, 1997. The origin of the report, noted a September 26, 1996, meeting where “a group of interested citizens met with the Mayor and senior staff to discuss the possibility of a Citizen Advisory Committee for Point Pleasant Park”. On October 7, 2008, the Point Pleasant Park Comprehensive Plan was adopted by Regional Council.

Since 1997, there has been no formal review of this PPPAC. The ToR were revised once on October 12, 2010, to indicate the Committee reports to Halifax and West Community Council (HWCC).

The mission of PPPAC is to ensure public participation in the administration and planning for Point Pleasant Park.

Below is an overview of PPPAC’s current mandate, as per its ToR, along with Staff’s assessment.

PPPAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
To advise the municipality on the management and evolution of the Park	PPPAC currently receives information and ask questions of staff. Staff bring relevant items to the committee for feedback or for information

PPPAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
	<p>purposes. The committee does not have a role in approving items.</p> <p>The main direction to staff is through the 2008 Master Plan.</p> <p>If the ToR were reviewed, clarification should be made that the committee would be consulted for input but not to approve any changes. This would provide clarity they are advisory to staff.</p>
<p>To apply the highest standards in all aspects of Park stewardship</p>	<p>As park users and committee members, PPPAC generally fulfills this task, but there is not an active stewardship role requirement. This is more of a value statement than a tangible mandate of the Committee.</p>
<p>To assist in preparing and implementation of the master plan, the management plan, and the operational plan, to solicit public input, and to communicate plans and decisions to the public about the plan's implementation</p>	<p>The 2008 Master Plan has been adopted. The Committee does not have a role in the management plan or operational plan.</p> <p>Staff provide operational updates only at Committee meetings.</p> <p>The committee does not have a role in soliciting public input or communication to the public other than through the information available via meeting agenda pages.</p> <p>If the ToR were reviewed, clarification should be added.</p> <p>The ToR should also be amended to remove the pre-amble regarding 2003 Hurricane Juan restoration as the 2008 Master Plan includes this work.</p>
<p>To monitor regular Park operations regarding ecological management practices;</p>	<p>This role is often actioned through correspondence the committee receives from the public that committee members raise at meetings or from being a park user.</p> <p>The terms of appointment and composition of the PPPAC require no ecological expertise among membership</p>
<p>To advise on park-related by-laws and regulations</p>	<p>The 2008 Master Plan is the main guiding document and includes the recovery direction from Hurricane Juan in 2003. There are no planned updates to the document.</p> <p>If the ToR were reviewed, clarification should be made that the committee would be consulted for input, but not to approve any changes.</p>

PPPAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
To perform ceremonial functions	There are no regular events. Some in-frequent one-time events. The Shilling Ceremony no longer takes place.

As part of the governance review, staff undertook an assessment of PPPAC's agendas for the 2022 and 2023 years. The results are included in the table below:

Year	Number of Meetings Planned	Number of Meetings Held	Staff Presentations or Consultations	Staff Updates	Motions for Staff Reports	External Presentations
2023	6	5	1	11	0	2
2022	5	3	2	7	2	1

PPPAC meetings are, in practice, largely for staff to provide information updates to the Committee. However, staff felt that PPPAC meetings also heighten public interest in the park, as demonstrated through correspondence, media inquiries and/or 311 call volume following meetings. Additionally, they felt that the Committee is often raising relevant items for discussion from their own park experience and/or correspondence from the public that the committee receives.

Based on this and in line with some of the recommendation above, staff would be looking to recommend further amendments to the ToR outside of the committee's mandate as follows:

- Change meeting schedules to reflect the need for 4-5 meetings per year, verses a standing monthly meeting schedule. This is already happening operationally, but the ToR should be updated to reflect current state; and
- Clarify the relationship and reporting between PPPAC and HWCC, as joint meetings do not occur and an annual report with representation at HWCC does not take place.

As part of the consultation, staff indicated the composition of the Committee is suitable and recommend that a member of Council continue to remain on the Committee.

It is recommended that PPPAC remain an active committee following a review and updating of its current ToR. The Committee is serving a purpose through public awareness via their meetings, have a long standing historical role as a committee, are a useful consulting body for staff, and provide a level of due diligence.

### **3. Western Common Advisory Committee (WCAC)**

The Western Common was created as a result of Regional Council's adoption of the 1999 study entitled "Planning for the Western Common". That study identified multiple priorities for the Western Common lands and directed staff to refine the conceptual plan through a more detailed examination of the lands and public objectives for the area, including but not limited to the Wilderness Common. The Western Common Wilderness Common Master Plan (Master Plan) was adopted by Regional Council on June 15, 2010. The plan was recommended by the Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee, which was created by the Western Region Community Council (previous iteration of a Community Council disbanded in November 2012) on September 25, 2006. The Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee was given the mandate to advise the design team for the Wilderness Common on planning and development issues related to the Western Common Wilderness areas land. The Committee completed its mandate as

part of the adoption of the Master Plan. The use of an Advisory Committee with the limited mandate to support in the development of the Master Plan is recalled as a positive and effective use of a committee by staff.

Following the adoption of the Master Plan, on October 25, 2011, a motion was made by HWCC to advise on the merit of the implementation of an advisory committee of the Western Common Wilderness Park. On May 13, 2015, a staff supplementary report<sup>3</sup> was submitted to HWCC recommending that an advisory committee not be established, with two primary reasons being put forward by staff:

- The implementation of the Western Common Master Plan does not warrant an Advisory Committee of Council at this time, as it is a long-range project with a rate of development which can be met through community consultation as needed; and
- Staff recognizes that an integrated resource management approach is preferred with the Western Common and in doing so all public voices must be heard.

HWCC defeated the staff recommendation and passed a motion recommending that Regional Council direct staff to draft an Administrative Order with ToR to create an advisory committee, which was approved on July 21, 2015. The Administrative Order was adopted by Regional Council on May 31, 2016, and WCAC held its first meeting on January 25, 2017. Within the ToR, section 5 outlines the overall context of the Western Common area, beyond the Wilderness Commons included in the Master Plan, including a) the protection of valuable ecology and cultural assets; b) the provision of access to sustainable wilderness recreation through improvement and programs c) the location of Otter Lake Regional Waste facility; and d) the possible expansion of the Ragged Lake Business Park.

There has been no formal review of WCAC since it was established. Minor changes were made to WCAC's ToR on July 26, 2016, and November 9, 2021.

Below is an overview of WCAC's current duties, as per Section 6 of its ToR, along with Staff's assessment.

WCAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
(a) the Committee shall advise Council on detailed planning and development of the Park	<p>Staff provide the committee with updates regarding the implementation of the Master Plan, but WCAC has no role on the detailed planning and development of the park.</p> <p>The development of the park has been set through the Master Plan.</p> <p>The Committee has no role in the capital budget, which is the primary mechanism through which the Master Plan is implemented.</p> <p>As per Bill 137, the powers of WCAC are suspended until April 22, 2025, when the community perspective of the implementation of the Master Plan relates to a proposed planning decisions by Regional Council under Part VIII of the HRM Charter, or by a community council under the policy establishing the Community Council.</p>

<sup>3</sup> <https://legacycontent.halifax.ca/Commcoun/west/documents/150513hwcc71.pdf>

WCAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
(b) the Committee shall advise Council on environmental sustainability in the Park, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) public access and wilderness recreation programming;</li> <li>(ii) impact of land uses, within and adjacent to the Western Common, on the Park;</li> <li>(iii) ecological diversity and connectivity;</li> <li>(iv) cultural landscapes; and</li> <li>(v) park operational matters.</li> </ul>	<p>These considerations are considered in the Master Plan.</p> <p>HRM has developed significant in-house staff expertise in these areas since 2010 with the original master plan. This includes staff expertise in Parks and Recreation, but also other Business Units, such as the Environment and Climate Change team.</p> <p>The Committee may have information or questions based on being members being park users; however, in practice, expertise is provided through the Master Plan or HRM staff.</p>

As part of the governance review, staff assessed WCAC’s agenda for the 2022 and 2023 years. The results are included in the table below:

Year	Number of Meetings Planned	Number of Meetings Held	Staff Presentations or Consultations	Staff Updates	Motions for Staff Reports	External Presentations
2023	4	2	1	4	0	0
2022	4	3	2	2	0	1

The review of the agenda, combined with the consultations from staff, indicate that WCAC meetings are largely for staff to provide information updates to the committee. While staff have no concerns with attending meetings or providing updates, there are concerns regarding the value and engagement for the volunteers considering the limited mandate and role of the committee in practice.

It is staff’s recommendation that WCAC be dissolved. While staff saw a positive use of a committee as part of the development of a Master Plan, there is an insufficient role and current purpose for the Committee in monitoring staff’s implementation of the Master Plan. Additionally, the limited role of WCAC has been further hampered by the impacts of Bill 137, as indicated above. This has resulted in challenges at the committee level and concern from staff about regarding what items to bring to these meetings other than current updates. Additionally, Clerk’s Office staff have found it challenging to recruit members for this committee. For example, the most recent WCAC recruitment in the Fall of 2023 saw an insufficient number of applicants to fill the available committee positions. Finally, for future projects relating to the Western Common area, such as the possible expansion of the Ragged Lake Business Park, staff would develop new planning documents through a comprehensive planning process (secondary planning) , which will include a robust public participation program. For these reasons, the advice from staff in 2015, remains that the ongoing implementation of the Western Common Master Plan does not warrant a Committee of Council, as it is a long-range project with a rate of development which can be met through community consultation as needed.

**4. Regional Watershed Advisory Board (RWAB)**

Halifax’s Watershed Advisory Boards (WABs) emerged in the 1970’s, at a time of mostly unchecked and unmonitored development and provided technical expertise that was not available at a staff level. At that time, the WABs played a key role in advising the municipality on how to minimize the impacts of development on water bodies. Since amalgamation, the role of WABs in the review of development plans



diminished, reducing the scope and purpose of these ABCs. This was a significant factor in the decision of Regional Council to consolidate the three WABs into a single, new Regional Watershed Advisory Board (RWAB), on February 19, 2013.

Since 2013, RWAB has undergone several reviews of its terms of reference. The most rigorous of these reviews was undertaken in 2019, which resulted in a staff report<sup>4</sup> to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) which recommended that a process be commenced to dissolve RWAB and alternatives for engagement proposed. The report's rationale for dissolving RWAB was: volume of work has been low and is declining, their subject matter expertise is (or can be) filled by internal subject matter experts and by contracting outside experts, their role in providing public at-large input is largely covered by other forms of water sector related public engagement and consultations, and that any outstanding functions can be served by ESSC.

As outlined in the 2019 report, HRM's approach to wetlands protection, riparian buffers, floodplains, stormwater management, coastal inundation and watershed planning has become more sophisticated. Many of the progressive steps advocated for have made their way into regional and secondary planning documents, by-laws, policies, RFPs and protocols. As municipal policies, protocols, by-laws and plans have matured and evolved, the water resource management environment has become both better defined and more prescriptive. These developments have resulted in a reduced scope of work for RWAB, since there is less discretionary approval requiring comment from the Board.

Staff's recommendation in the 2019 report was defeated by the ESSC, which requested a supplementary report seeking amendments to RWAB's ToR. ESSC at the time, felt it would be more appropriate to pursue amendments to address the issues outlined in the staff report, including changing the membership composition to provide it with a more professional and academic orientation and expanding their ToR to include advising on joint projects with Halifax Water. The supplementary report was received on December 7, 2020<sup>5</sup> and the recommended amendments to RWAB's ToR were passed by Regional Council on January 12, 2021. At this meeting, a supplemental report was also requested to look at adding a member of Council from ESSC to RWAB; this was not recommended by staff and maintaining the member composition unchanged was approved by Council on November 23, 2021.<sup>6</sup>

The 2019 report provided a detailed assessment of RWAB's agendas from 2013-2018 (see below table).

**Table 2: Activity Summary for Regional Watersheds Advisory Board (2013-2018)**

Activity	2018 <sup>8</sup>	2017 <sup>9</sup>	2016	2015	2014	2013
Meetings Held	6	10	6	8	11	6
Meetings Cancelled	1	2	5	4	1	0
Policies/Studies Considered	1	1	2	5	7 <sup>10</sup>	7
Planning Cases Considered	0	2	0	1	2	0
By-Laws Considered	0	0	1 <sup>11</sup>	0	0	1
Letters/Reports to ESSC	1	0	0	1	4	0
Items Referred to Board by ESSC	0	0	0	2 <sup>12</sup>	1 <sup>13</sup>	3
Motions Passed	1	4	0	2	9	5
Motions Withdrawn	0	3	0	0	0	0
Board Vacancies	6	4	6	3	1	0

Since the 2019 staff report, there have been two key developments impacting the role of RWAB; the growth of the Environment & Climate Change team to a division level within the Property, Fleet and Environment Business Unit, and the introduction of Bill 137, by the Province of Nova Scotia. The Environment & Climate Change team is approximately 30 FTEs, 5 of which are part of the Environment Team with subject matter expertise in watershed management. This is an increase from 1 FTE at the time

<sup>4</sup> <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/190110essc1211.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/201207esscsp1212.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/211123rc1513.pdf>

of the 2019 staff report. This represents considerable growth in HRM's in-house staff expertise specifically on water management.

The second development is the impact of Bill 137, which suspends a majority of RWAB's duties until at least April 22, 2025. Suspended duties include:

1. Advising ESSC on municipal policy projects as required under the HRM Charter, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, and Secondary Planning Strategies, and as may be specifically assigned by the ESSC;
2. As required by the HRM Charter, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, and Secondary Planning Strategies, to fulfil the legislated requirements with respect to municipal development activities; and
3. Performs duties as directed by Regional Council on matters described in the Municipal Planning Strategies.

From RWAB's existing terms of reference, this leaves the following duties unimpacted:

2A. Advise the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee on joint projects between the Municipality and Halifax Water respecting the development of policies appropriate to protect water resources in the Municipality.

However, as outlined in the 2020 supplementary staff report, section 2A does not require Halifax Water to engage with RWAB. Staff noted that Halifax Water has their own engagement process and practices for seeking expertise on water resource management. Staff therefore did not recommend that Council include this as part of RWAB's terms of reference.

The other piece of remaining work, located in some Development Agreements, requires that RWAB be presented with water quality testing results. These results in many instances are also required to be presented to the North West Community Council. Staff continue to bring water quality results forward to RWAB, as required.

A more current assessment of agendas was done for this report as the conditions since 2019 have changed, as outlined above, and have had a significant impact on the role of RWAB.

Year	Number of Meetings Planned	Number of Meetings Held	Staff Presentations or Consultations	Staff Updates	Motions for Staff Reports	External Presentations
2023	6	5	1	9	0	0
2022	12	4	3	3	0	1

The review of the agenda, combined with the consultations from staff, indicate that RWAB meetings are largely for staff to provide information updates to the committee and the volume of meetings held per year has declined since the 2019 report.

For the reasons outlined above, staff are recommending that RWAB be dissolved. It continues to be staff's position that there are various mechanisms for public engagement, ability to access specialization consultation or engagement when required through external organizations, adequate coverage of RWAB existing mandate through staff expertise and Council approved policies (such as Green Network Plan, Regional Plan, and HalifACT), and use of ESSC and North West Community Council to ensure diligence on water resource management and related issues.

The needs and capabilities of the Municipality have evolved considerably since the inception of RWAB, and even since 2019. Supporting a WAB, while the Municipality has developed considerable in-house staff expertise in this area creates potential duplications and inefficiencies. A further adjustment to RWAB's TOR, is not recommended even as an alternative for these reasons.

Additionally, staff are seeing frustration at the committee level relating to their limited mandate, which is an item that pre-dates the impact of Bill 137. For example, as outlined in the 2019 report, since 2013, RWAB's members have only reviewed five planning cases (relating to development occurring in Bedford West, Beaver Bank and Waverley) as not all municipal planning strategies contain a requirement to consult with RWAB and applications were only brought forward when required. Additionally, the Centre Plan Package B adoption process was streamlined to include necessary Committees as directed by Council and did not include RWAB as well as three other committees <sup>7</sup>. These examples highlight the limited role of RWAB even prior to Bill 137.

Finally, recruitment for RWAB continues to be an issue. The 2019 report noted that, based on a review from 2013-2018, "RWAB has had between one (1) and six (6) vacancies per year, meaning that the rate of vacancy has ranged between a high of fifty percent (50%) and a low of eight per cent (8%)". During the most recent recruitment in the Fall of 2023, there were insufficient applicants to fill available RWAB vacancies.

## **5. Planning Committees**

### ***Planning Advisory Committees (PACs)***

Under the HRM Charter, Community Councils are permitted to establish PACs. On February 19, 2013, Regional Council granted Community Councils, through Administrative Order 48, the Community Council Administrative Order, the authority to create no more than two PACs. In the past, PACs were used to assist with the planning review process and provide feedback on discretionary development applications prior to the staff report being considered at Community Council. In some instances, Public Information Meetings (PIMs) were also hosted by PACs. Following receiving information from staff, PACs provided a memo to Community Council at the time of the staff report being considered but did not make a recommendation to Community Council on the report.

As of the time of writing this report, the list of HRM's PACs include:

- Halifax Peninsula PAC
- Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council PAC (for the lands at 651 Portland Hills Drive Dartmouth)
- Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee
- North West PAC
- Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee

HRM planning committees have been heavily impacted by Bill 137. Under the provincial legislation, the ability to refer planning recommendations to planning and other advisory committees is suspended until April 22, 2025. The staff support for PAC is split between Planning and Development and the Office of the Municipal Clerk. The Clerk's Office supported Halifax Peninsula PAC and North West PAC, which have not met since Summer 2021 and Spring 2022, respectively. These PACs dealt with various planning applicants as required under their terms of reference.

The Port Wallace, Margeson Drive and Harbour-East Marine Drive PACs were supported by Planning and Development staff. Staff have confirmed that the Port Wallace Community Public Participation Committee's work is complete. The Committee's last meeting was held December 2021, just prior to the designated of a Special Planning Area (SPA) in March 2022 and before Bill 137 in April 2022, which

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<sup>7</sup> <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/200114rc1512.pdf>

meant that they could no longer meet. Similarly, the development for the lands at 651 Portland Hills Drive, Dartmouth, are also complete, which ended the work of the Harbour-East Marine Drive PAC. Additionally, as part of the amendment package related to Phase 3 of the Regional Plan Review the Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy was amended to remove the need to have a committee for any Comprehensive Development Districts so future committees will not be required in the Dartmouth Plan Area. Finally, on the Margeson Drive Master Plan Committee, staff advised that a small portion, referred to as Phase 1, of the Margeson Drive Master Plan is covered by the Provincial SPA. This area received approval by the Minister, and therefore there is no further action anticipated under the SPA. Planning staff were in the process of creating the PAC and setting up a workplan plan to begin a detailed review of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Master Plan project prior to the announcement of Bill 137. The developer subsequently requested that the Master Plan project lands be considered for inclusion with the Urban Service Area and consequently, Phases 2 and 3 are expected to be considered as part of Phase 5 of the Regional Plan Review project.

The approach to public engagement for planning matters has evolved since the creation of many of these PACs. On April 25, 2023, Council adopted Administrative Order (AO) 2023-002-ADM, Respecting Public Participation for Planning Documents, Certain Planning Applications and Engagements with Abutting Municipalities. This AO establishes a minimum standard for public participation, identifies opportunities and method for seeking public opinions on all planning documents, as well as standards for public participation for new development agreements and amendments to land use by-law where a municipal planning strategy amendment is not required. The policy also identified that additional methods for public participation for planning documents can be further developed using the Planning and Development Engagement Guidebook.

Staff are recommending that HRM's PACs be dissolved. In addition to dissolving active PACs, staff are also recommending that Administrative Order 48 be amended to remove the ability for a Community Council to create PACs and repeal the standard terms of reference in Schedule 3. The ability to create a PAC would still be permitted under the HRM Charter in the future, should Bill 137 expire in April 2025. but would require approval by Regional Council. These recommendations are being put for several reasons. First, due to the impact of Bill 137, PACs have not been meeting since 2022, with their mandates suspended until at least 2025. Even prior to Bill 137, however, staff have noted the questionable utility of PACs as part of the planning review process. As part of the staff consultations conducted for this governance review, staff indicated that, since Bill 137 has been in place, there has been no significant impacts to the planning process and staff have seen efficiency in the streamlined process. On a balance of considerations, staff do not believe that the significant time and resources which went into supporting PACs, when they were able to meet, were justified by the limited impacts PACs had on shaping outcomes in the HRM decision-making process. Additionally, enhanced public engagement practices are now in place with the adoption of the new Administrative Order for Public Engagement. This has made the role of PACs increasingly redundant as a means of incorporating the public point of view in the planning review process.

### ***Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC)***

As part of a review of planning committees, staff also looked at CDAC which was created by Regional Council on October 4, 2011. CDAC has not met since summer 2021 and was specifically required for the development and implementation of the first five-year review of the Regional Plan (RP+5) and the Centre Plan Project. Both projects have been completed, so the committee has reached the end of its mandate. The public participation program for the current Regional Plan Review project has been approved by Regional Council and does not require a committee. Consequently, staff are recommending that CDAC be dissolved.

### **6. Investment Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC)**

IPAC was created by Regional Council on April 7, 1998, with a mandate to recommend an investment policy for HRM and provide ongoing monitoring of investment activities. As outlined in the staff report at the time, staff were using an investment fund administered by a private company for surplus cash on

Operations, Reserves and Trust Funds. Given the size of the funds invested, there was a desire at the time for a mechanism for public input regarding investment vehicles and constraints; the intention was that perspective and experience from public members on financial markets would be considered an asset. IPAC was also viewed as a way to reduce costs as there would be less reliance on the investments from a privately managed fund and increased investment returns through a revised investment strategy.

There has been no formal review of IPAC since it was established. IPAC ToR is embedded within HRM's Investment Policy document, which is slightly different than other committees with a separate document. Below is an overview of IPAC's current mandate, as per its ToR, along with Staff's assessment.

IPAC Current Mandate	Staff Comment
<p>The mandate of the Policy Committee includes establishing credit quality restrictions, recommending an appropriate set of guidelines, practices and procedures to guide the investment operations of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), and monitoring same on an ongoing basis through periodic reports to Regional Council or any other body as directed by Regional Council.</p>	<p>The Investment Policy is very narrow on what instruments and counterparties can be invested in and how the policy can be changed. This leaves a very limited scope of what the committee can advise on, and actions staff can take if advice is given.</p> <p>Reports from IPAC are submitted to Audit and Finance Standing Committee who then submits them to Regional Council.</p>
<p>The Policy Committee shall review the administration of the Investment Policy by the Halifax Regional Municipality staff responsible for on-going investment activities, as designated by the Treasurer. Such review shall focus on compliance with the specific investment objectives of the Policy and continued relevance of the Investment Policy itself. The Policy Committee shall submit reports to Regional Council or the body designated by Regional Council not less frequently than quarterly</p>	<p>Additionally, as adopted by Council on February 6, 2024, IPAC will now meet semi-annually instead of quarterly.</p>
<p>The Investment Policy shall be reviewed by the Policy Committee annually. Each annual review shall include the continued relevance of the Policy objectives as well as the strategies employed to meet the objectives in the context of evolving market conditions, experience in applying the Policy to actual decision making as well as the history of the Policy. In addition, staff periodically consult with other Municipalities with similar investment activities and bring to the Policy Committee best practices of these other Municipalities for consideration for inclusion in the HRM Investment Policy.</p>	<p>The Investment Policy is reviewed by IPAC annually and amended as required. Amendments are primarily driven by staff's recommendations resulting from a jurisdictional scan against other municipalities bodies and their investment strategy versus the recommendation of the IPAC.</p> <p>Changes to the Investment Policy must be recommended by Audit and Finance Standing Committee, adopted by Regional Council and then subject to ministerial approval.</p>

As part of the governance review, staff assessed IPAC's meeting schedule. In 2022 and 2023, IPAC met four times and the only matters on the agenda were related to investment policy review and investment activities. On February 6, 2024, Regional Council recommended as part of the adoption of amendments to the Investment Policy that IPAC meetings be reduced to semi-annually from quarterly to better align with receipt of property tax and investing schedules. Adjusting to two meetings per year will also assist with quorum challenges that the committee is experiencing.

In addition to quorum challenges, staff also advise there is an engagement and expertise challenge. The ToR do not require expertise explicitly in municipal finance or treasury investments. The requirements are “a combination of finance and investment knowledge and relevant professional, business or educational experience.” As a result, providing sound investment strategies in keeping with the policy are limited. Recommendations to make investment policy changes that are acceptable within the confines of the objectives of the Investment Policy are generally proposed by staff. This creates a misalignment, where volunteer members may not be fully engaged as the role that this committee plays is very limited in terms of adjustments that can be made to the Investment Policy.

It is staff’s recommendation that IPAC be dissolved and oversight of the HRM’s Investment Policy be moved under the terms of reference of Audit and Finance Standing Committee. The current investment policy is working for HRM and staff have measures in place to ensure there is oversight on the policy outside of IPAC through the quarterly Treasurer’s Report that is sent to Audit and Finance Standing Committee. This report includes a summary of quarterly investing activities, segmented investment performance, and a comparison to the benchmark that is set forth in the Investment Policy. An Investment Policy is required under the HRM Charter and staff cannot make an investing decision that is outside of the policy. Further, the Investment Policy requires a no-risk stance to investing to meet objectives and its adherence is reviewed by the Audit and Finance Standing Committee and Regional Council. Staff contends there is inherent structure in place to ensure appropriate oversight for investing, and this structure is in-line with oversight of other municipal treasuries across Canada. The Investment Policy itself must be reviewed annually including a jurisdictional scan against other municipalities. Recommended changes to the policy are reported to Audit and Finance Standing Committee and require adoption by Regional Council and ministerial approval. The rigorous process associated with the Investment Policy provides oversight of staff investing activities, but also inherently limits the influence of a committee as HRM’s Investment Policy outside of minor adjustments is effectively set. While a committee may have been useful in establishing a policy during the change of investment strategy in 1998, it is no longer required as the initial review body can be adjusted to refer to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee.

**Attachment 3 – Governance Review Implementation Plan**

Phase	Overview	Actions	Timeline
1	Implementation Plan and Advisory Committee Review	<p>Create implementation plan</p> <p>Review and make recommendations on identified Committees.</p> <p>Legislative amendments to reflect direction from Council on identified Committees.</p>	Spring 2024
2	Standing Committee Review, Framework for Lived Experience Committees, Legislative Amendments and Committee Procedures Administrative Order	<p>Review of all Standing Committee Terms of Reference to reduce duplications and align with current municipal priorities. This will include incorporating Community Safety under the mandate of Executive Standing Committee, as per its Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Develop a framework to review the Lived Experience Committees* in terms of creation, reporting and support models. This work will also include a review of Terms of Reference for Lived Experience Committees to better define roles of Committee, staff liaison and business unit staff. Amendments may be recommended to support role clarification.</p> <p>Development of Committee Procedures Administrative Order. As part of the development of the AO a jurisdictional scan will be completed.</p>	Fall 2024 / Winter 2025
3	Guidelines when creating a new Committee	Develop an assessment framework to be used by staff when making recommendations to Council regarding the creation of new HRM Committees	Winter 2025
4	Review of the Councillor Appointment Process	<p>Review current as is process to reduce duplication, close gaps and increase efficiencies and resources optimization</p> <p>May include minor amendments to existing Committee terms of reference</p>	Prior to Councillor Appointments in November 2026

\* Lived Experience Committees includes: Accessibility Advisory Committee, African Descent Advisory Committee, Women’s Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Committee



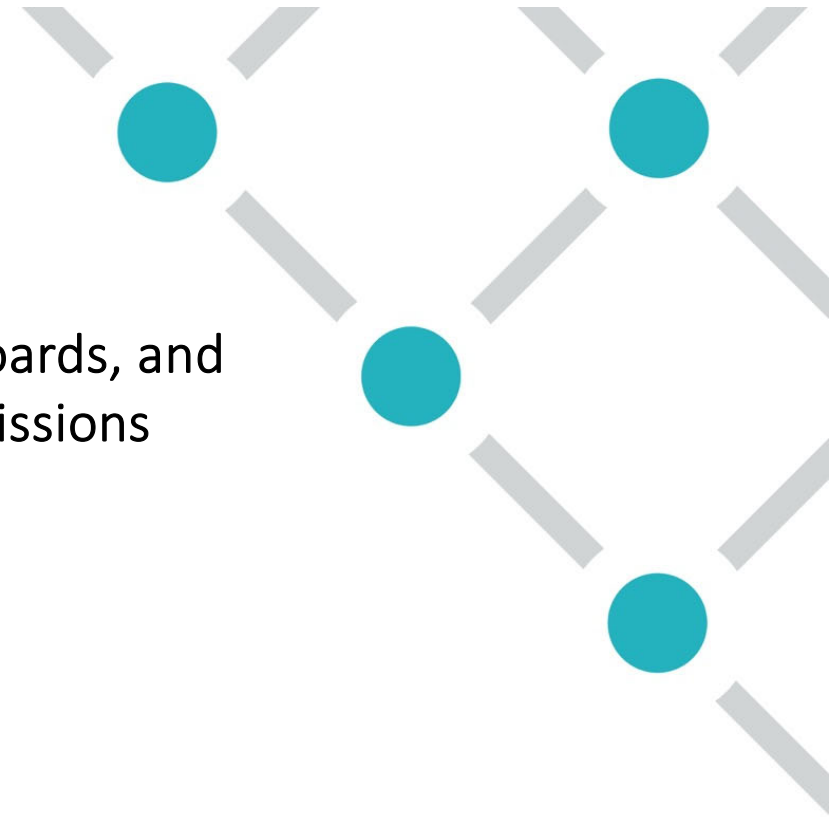
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Halifax Agencies, Boards, and  
Committees/Commissions  
Member Survey

April 2024

Prepared for:

**HALIFAX**







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# Background and Methodology



## Background and Purpose

### Background

- In June, 2023, Regional Council passed a motion that directed the Chief Administrative Officer to “review and provide recommendations on all boards, committees and commissions that include citizen volunteers, in an effort to reduce duplication, close gaps and increase efficiencies and resources optimization, and all standing committees of council, looking at the terms of reference, especially their duties, responsibilities, administration, and procedures, looking for improvements, efficiencies, and work that flows to Council.”

### Purpose and Objectives

- Narrative Research conducted a survey on behalf of the Halifax Regional Municipality to help inform the CAO’s report to Council related to Halifax Agency, Board, & Committee/Commission (ABC).
- Research objective:
  - Gather opinions from all citizen volunteers of ABCs to understand their feedback on their roles and the functionality of the committee they volunteer on.



# Methodology – Quantitative Example



Mode  
**Online survey**



Audience  
**Committee Members from Halifax  
Agencies, Boards, Committees, and  
Commissions (ABC)**



**51 completes**



Data Collection Dates  
**3 – 9 April, 2024**



Average Completion Time  
**9.2 minutes**



### Sampling/Administration

A generic link was provided to HRM, who then distributed the invitation to committee members

The margin of error was not applicable.



Caution is warranted when interpreting results given small sample size. Some survey questions yielded fewer than 51 responses as all questions were optional.



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# Summary of Objectives and Key Findings



## Key Findings

### Key Findings

#### Committee member satisfaction and expectations

- **Members of municipal committees are generally satisfied with their work on ABCs** especially when it comes to the support they receive from the Municipality. However, **satisfaction among planning-related committees appears to be lower** than other committee categories.
- **Despite the general satisfaction, a third of committee members feel dissatisfied about the impact of their work** on Municipal decision-making.
- **While most feel their expectations have been met or exceeded** through committee work, just under half thought their work would have a greater impact on municipal decision than it has.

#### Communication and collaboration with the municipality

- **Communication within the committees themselves, and with the Municipality appears to be working effectively**, with most committee members feeling they are kept in the loop on relevant issues in a timely manner. However, one in five admit are confused about the ABCs roles and responsibilities.

#### Motivators for committee work & intent to continue

- Committees like that their work lets them voice their opinions, stay involved, and give back to the community
- **The majority of committee members intend to continue serving on their respective ABCs**, with just one in ten unlikely to do so.

#### Concerns with the current committee structure & operation

- **The lack of opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process** is causing some committee members to feel that their work lacks meaning.
- **Members want more opportunities to interact with and advise council.** Seeing and hearing the impact of committee work on Municipal actions would likely increase satisfaction among active committee members.



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# Detailed Findings



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# Work Satisfaction and Expectations





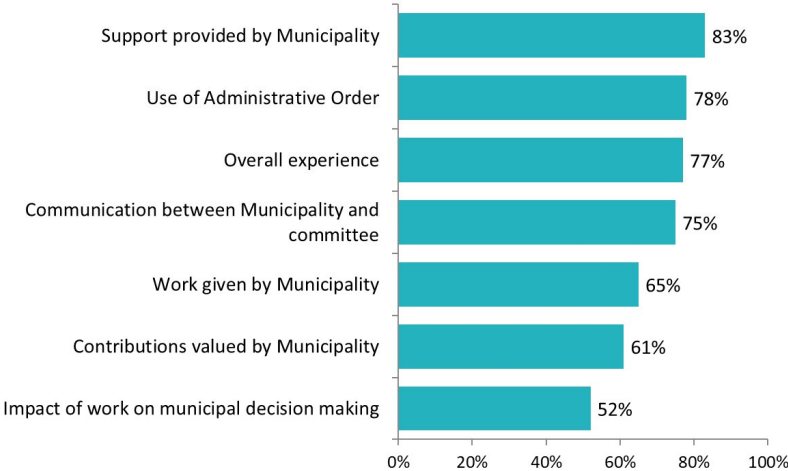
# Work Satisfaction

*Committee members are generally satisfied with their work, especially with the support they receive from the Municipality.*

Overall, committee members appear at least somewhat satisfied with their committee work. Surveyed committee members are most satisfied with the support received from the Municipality (83%). About half of respondents indicate an extreme level of satisfaction with their overall experience (48%), use of administrative order (57%), and the support provided by the Municipality (52%). The highest level of dissatisfaction among committee members is with the impact of their work on the municipal decision making (30%). Across committees, Financial committee members report high satisfaction with all areas of their committee works while Planning committee members appears to be less satisfied than other committee types.

### Satisfaction with Areas

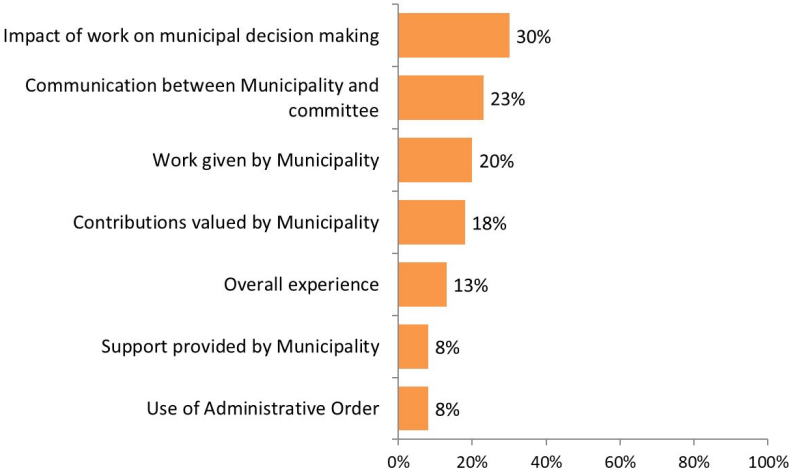
Extremely/Somewhat Satisfied



Q.2\_1-7: When it comes to the agency/board/committee or commission you are a part of, please rate how satisfied you are with each of the following areas? (n=48-50)

### Dissatisfaction with Areas

Somewhat/Extremely Dissatisfied



Q.2\_1-7: When it comes to the agency/board/committee or commission you are a part of, please rate how satisfied you are with each of the following areas? (n=48-50)

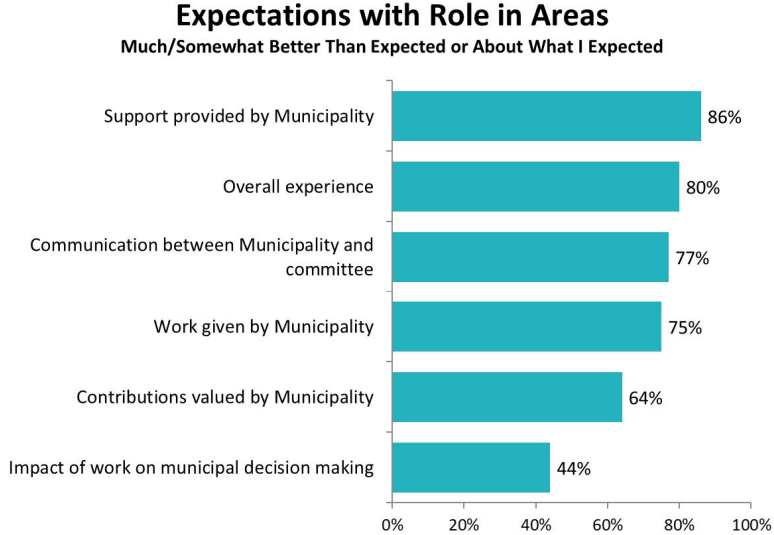


# Role Expectations

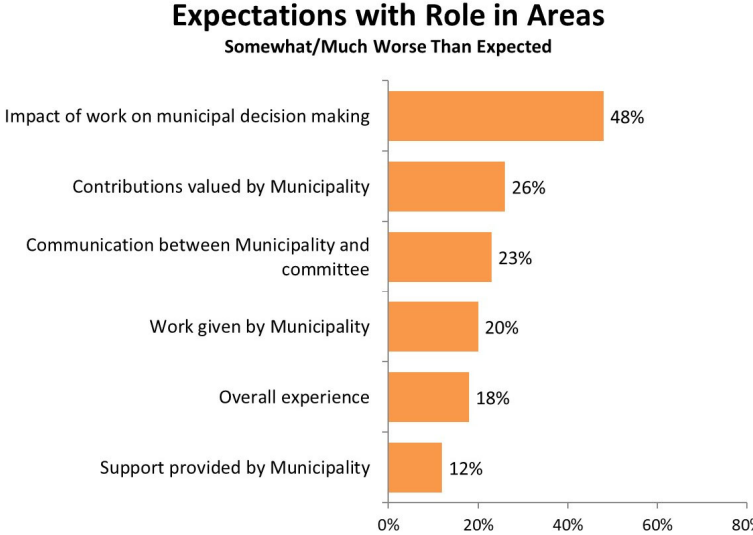
Committee members generally feel their experience has either met or exceeded their initial expectations, however one half hoped their work would be having a bigger impact on municipal decision making.

Congruent with results on committee satisfaction, most feel their initial expectations of what committee work would be have been exceeded or met since joining their respective ABCs. For the overall experience, 24% of committee members say their experience has been much better than expected, 24% say it has been somewhat better, 30% say it has met expectations, 12% feel it is somewhat worse, and 6% say it is much worse than expected.

Half feel underwhelmed about the impact of their work on the Municipality’s decision-making (48%) while a quarter thought the Municipality would value their contributions more (26%) and that communication would be better (23%). Planning committee members appear more likely to feel their expectations have not been met across factors.



Q.3\_1-6: Thinking back to when you first expressed interest in working with your agency/board/committee or commission, to what extent has your role met your expectations in the following areas? (n=48-51)



Q.3\_1-6: Thinking back to when you first expressed interest in working with your agency/board/committee or commission, to what extent has your role met your expectations in the following areas? (n=48-51)



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# Communications and Work Aspects

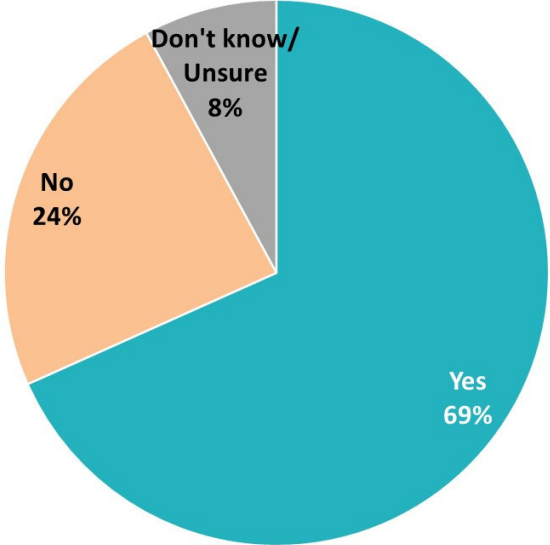


# Communications from the HRM

*Most committee member feel that they are kept informed of relevant issues by the HRM in a timely manner, while one in four disagree.*

Evidently, the majority of surveyed committee members feel the HRM keeps them well-informed of important issues in a timely manner (69%), suggesting effective communication between the HRM and individual ABCs. Across committees, members of Financial committees are more likely to agree, while those on Planning committees are more likely to disagree.

## Agency/Board/Committee/Commission is Kept Informed of Relevant Issues in a Timely Manner



Q.4: In your opinion, is the agency/board/committee/commission kept informed of relevant issues in a timely manner? (n=51)

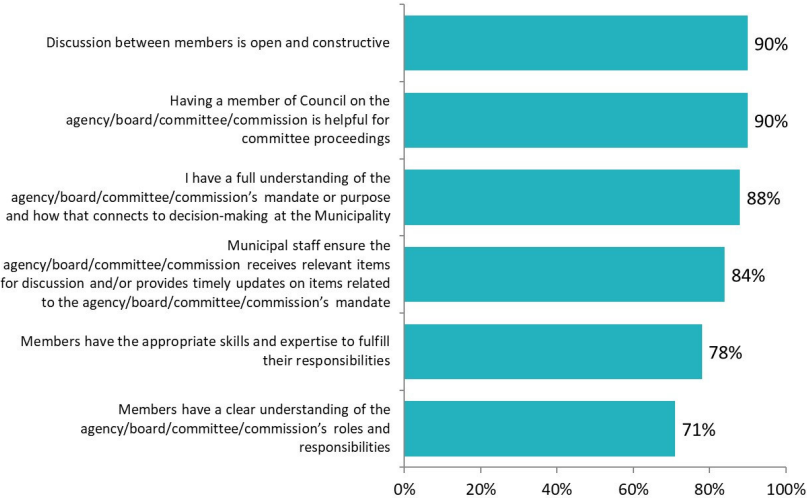


# Working within the Committee

Current committee members feel committees are working effectively within their respective team and with the Municipality.

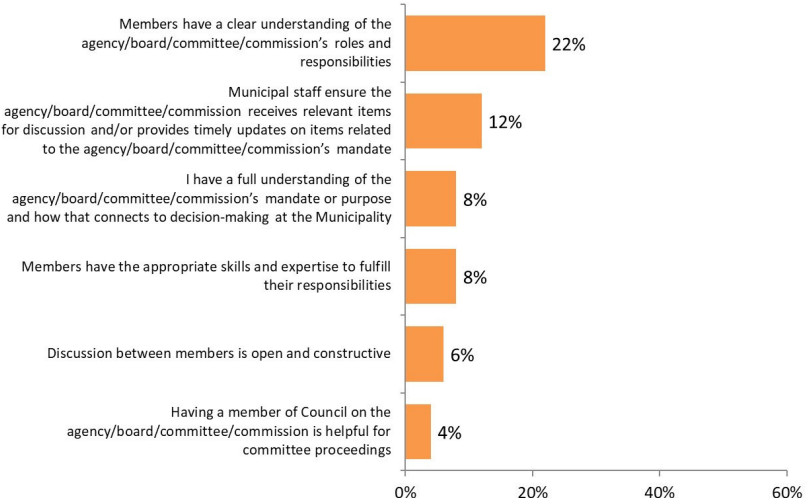
Committee members generally agree that the current system works well for them. Members agree that committees have **open and constructive discussions between members, that having a member of council on the committee is helpful, that committee mandates are clear,** and that **municipal staff provide timely updates on items related to the mandate.** The area where committee members are most divided is on their understanding of their own committee’s roles and responsibilities, with 22% disagreeing that their committee’s direction is clear. Members of Planning-related committees appear particularly unclear about their roles and responsibilities.

### Opinion of Statements Strongly/Somewhat Agree



Q.5\_1-6: As an agency/board/committee/commission member, to what extent do you agree with each of the following: (n=50-51)

### Opinion of Statements Somewhat/Strongly Disagree



Q.5\_1-6: As an agency/board/committee/commission member, to what extent do you agree with each of the following: (n=50-51)



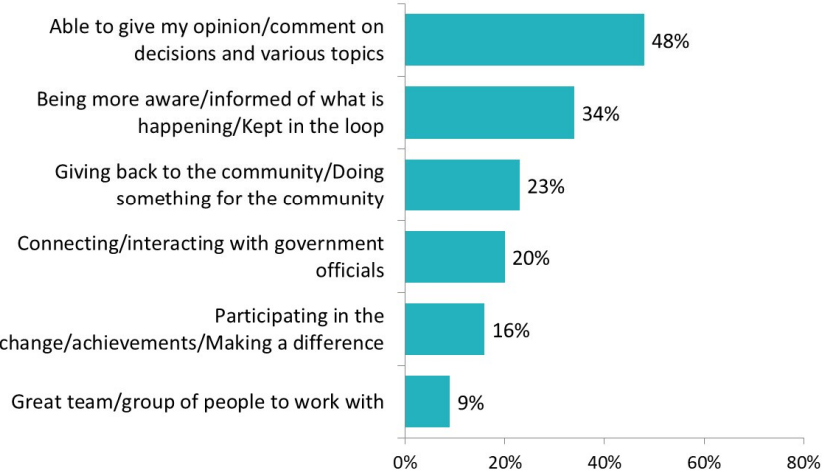
# Work Aspect Liked

Committee members enjoy their work because it allows them to give their opinions, stay informed, and give back to their community.

When asked what they enjoy about their work, half of committee members say they appreciate **being able to contribute to the decision-making process** (48%), without being prompted. Results are generally consistent across committees.

## Like About Work Currently Done As an Agency/Board/Committee/Commission Member

Key Unaided Mentions



Q.7: What is it that you currently like about the work you currently do as an agency/board/committee/commission member? (n=44)

*"I enjoy sharing when the opportunity arises. I like learning about what is happening with our communities but would like to learn more about what we as a committee can do to support the community."*

*"The work is important, and it can be challenging. The group is relatively good though some are not at all committed to it."*

*"Keeps me informed on relevant projects and updates around my community. Allows me to provide input from my own experiences while also learning from the diverse experiences of other members."*

*"I like feeling like I'm contributing and providing relevant feedback based on personal and professional experience. First voice is the most important when dealing with accessibility and inclusion."*

*"Our agenda, discussions and motions are very meaningful to the community in general. We really feel we're helping to make our community better."*



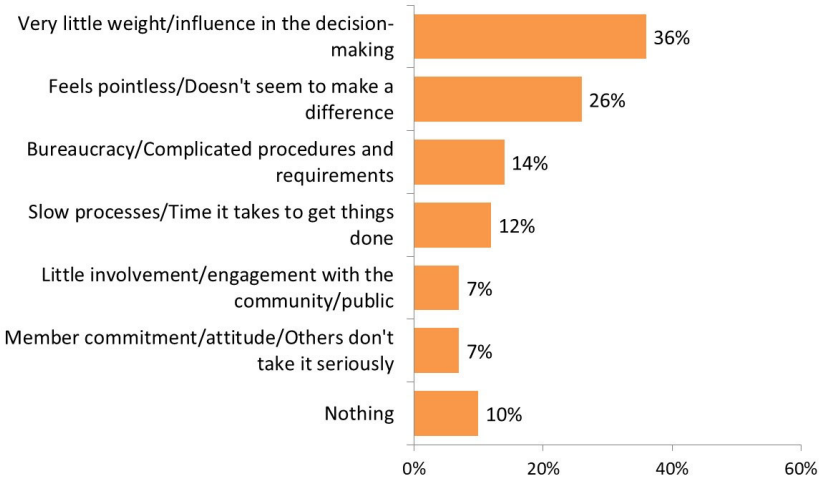
# Work Aspect Disliked

Committee members dislike having little influence in the decision-making process or feeling like their work makes no difference.

Results further indicate that some committee members are left feeling unfulfilled in their committee work, wanting to see more impact from their recommendations.

## Dislike About Work Currently Done As an Agency/Board/Committee/Commission Member

Key Unaided Mentions



Q.8: And what do you dislike about the work you currently do as an agency/board/committee/commission member? (n=42)

*"I feel like we have no power or that we lack a clear understanding of how to leverage the power we might have."*

*"I feel that we could be doing more for the municipality. We meet and discuss. I would like to be more hands-on, feet on the ground, face to face."*

*"Just want to be able to do more. Be able to participate in special events in community so people can put a face to the committee."*

*"It doesn't seem like our work gets to the Standing committee very much. There has been recent discussion of having a Council member sit in on our meetings which would 100% help."*

*"I am frustrated by the length of time it takes to get ANYTHING done!"*

*"The work is highly politicized and as such lacks true accountability."*



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# Likelihood to Continue



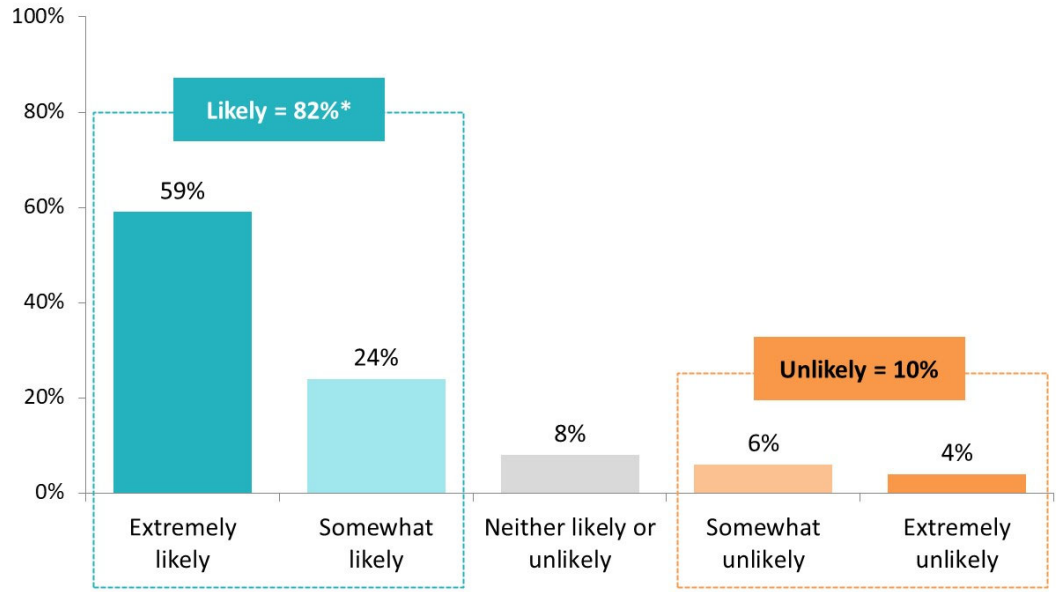


# Likelihood to Continue Serving

The majority of committee members are interested in continuing to serve on their respective ABCs.

Committee members are highly interested in continuing to serve on agencies, boards, committees, and commissions, signaling most are having a positive experience. Of the 82% who are likely to continue, 59% say they are extremely likely, which indicates a stronger level of commitment.

## Likelihood of Continuing to Serve on Municipal Agencies/Boards/Committees/Commissions in Future



Q.6: Based on your experience, how likely are you to continue serving on Municipal agencies/boards/committees/commissions in the future (either on your current one or a different one)? (n=51) \*Due to rounding.

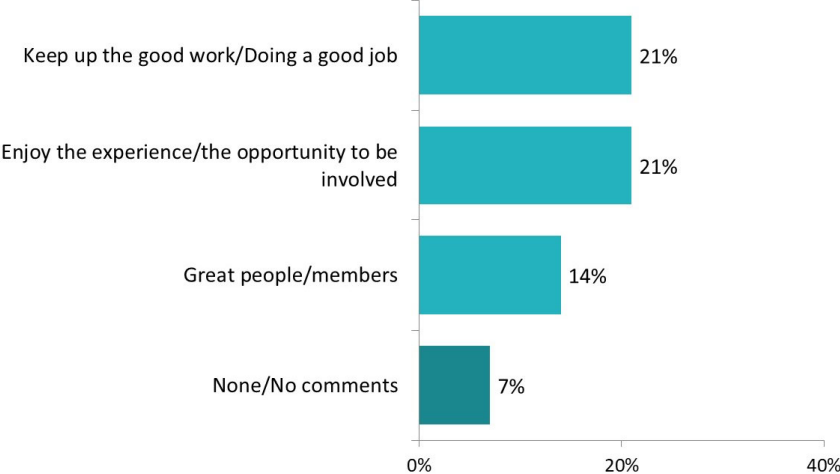


# Final Comments

In their final comments, committee members applaud HRM’s good work and indicate having enjoyed the experience working alongside the Municipality, though some suggestions for improvement are noted, including professional development, a need for more involvement from council, and better sharing of best practices and training across committees.

## Final Comments About the Municipality’s Agencies/Boards/Committees/Commission

Key Unaided Mentions



Q.9: Please provide any final comments or recommendations you may have about the way the Municipality’s Agencies/Boards/Committees/Commission operate? (n=29)

*“Suggestions for professional development on topics to learn more about how advisory groups can amplify their value.”*

*“Though the official structure helps keep things in order, it hurts the flexibility of conversations and recommendations committees can offer.”*

*“There needs to be more direct involvement from council in order to demonstrate to members how their discussions are making an impact, both through recommendations on projects and policies up for consideration.”*

*“The legislative assistants are fantastic!”*

*“I encourage you to involve committee members in sharing best practices with each other through meetings, workshops, and training sessions.”*

*“Conduct training sessions for chairs and vice chairs. Chairpersons who do not understand basic parliamentary procedure (e.g., when and how to conduct a vote) increases the reliance on the legislative assistant during a meeting and impedes the effectiveness of the meeting!”*



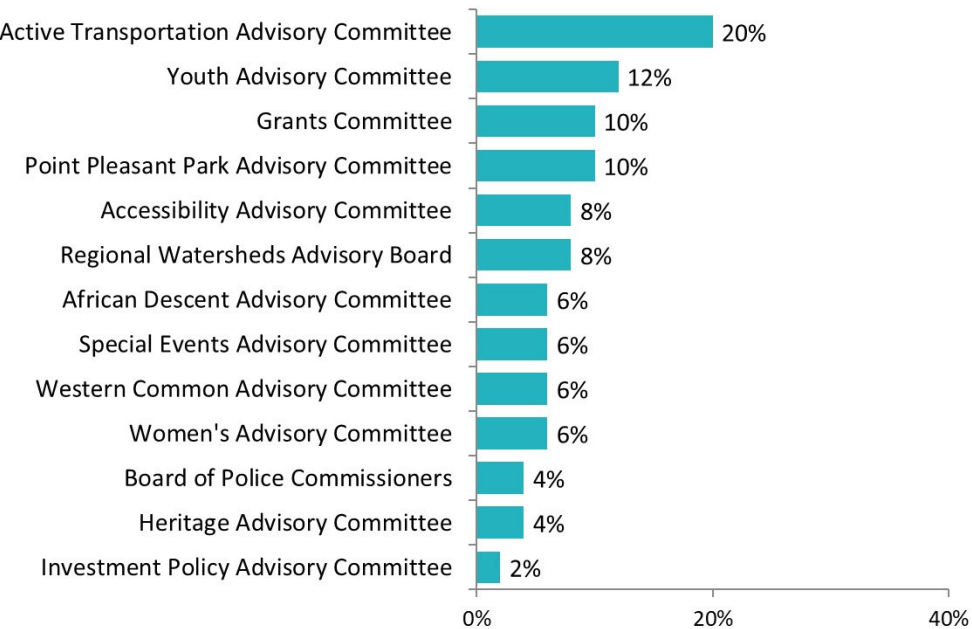
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# Respondent Profile & Committee Organization



# Respondent Profile

## Member of Agency, Board, Committee, or Commission



Q.1: To begin, which of the following agencies, boards, committees, or commissions are you currently an active member of? (n=51)



## Committee Categories

Committee Category	Agencies, Boards, and Committees Included
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grants Committee</li><li>• Investment Policy Advisory Committee</li><li>• Special Events Advisory Committee</li></ul>
Lived Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessibility Advisory Committee</li><li>• African Descent Advisory Committee</li><li>• Women's Advisory Committee</li><li>• Youth Advisory Committee</li></ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design Review Committee</li><li>• Regional Watersheds Advisory Board</li></ul>
Required by Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board of Police Commissioners</li><li>• Heritage Advisory Committee</li><li>• License Appeal Committee</li></ul>
Special Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active Transportation Advisory Committee</li><li>• Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee</li><li>• Western Common Advisory Committee</li></ul>



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Every insight tells a story.