

# **2024 Annual Report:**

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**CÉLINE VAUTOUR, CHAIR, ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MAY 26, 2025**

**EXECUTIVE STANDING COMMITTEE**

# Presentation Overview

1. Information about  
members and meetings

2. Committee priorities,  
presentations and discussion

# Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises and assists Regional Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on the impact of municipal policies, programs and services on persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee normally meets on the third Monday of each month, at 4:00 p.m. Meeting dates and times are subject to change.

*- Next Meeting scheduled: June 16 2024*

# Accessibility Advisory Committee

In 2004, Committee met  
monthly, except March,  
September & December

Meetings were Remote &  
Livestreamed  
*(recordings available on Youtube)*

# Accessibility Advisory Committee

Two monthly meetings were **omitted** due to the municipal election in October 2024

The AAC Annual Town Hall in November 2024 was deferred to November 2025

# Current Committee members

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- Céline Vautour, Chair
- Rachele Manett, Vice Chair
- Councillor Trish Purdy
- Councillor Laura White
- Councillor Jean St-Amand
- Glenn Babcock
- Nikolas Harris
- Anne Sinclair
- Jamil Sinno
- Cathi Stevenson
- Oliver Keith

# Former Committee members

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- Councillor Cathy Deagle-Gammon
- Former Councillor Paul Russell
- Andrew Taylor
- June Feswick
- April Adams
- Liz Doull
- Kristen Hemming
- Michelle Mahoney
- Jordan Waterbury

# 2023 Work Plan- Priorities

## Priority 1:

Built Form - Accessibility Standards for current and future HRM infrastructure projects, including sidewalks and other HRM-owned infrastructure

## Priority 2:

AAC Engagement throughout the Municipal Budget Planning Process

## Priority 3:

Accessible Parking in the HRM

# Priority 1

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Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

# Priority 1

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## Staff Presentations

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **HRM Accessibility Strategy** (April 22, 2024) — *Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor*
- **Snow Removal in HRM** (June 3, 2024)— *Steven York, Manager, Winter Operations & Training*
- **Temporary Pedestrian Travel Paths**(June 3, August 18, 2024) — *Crysta Cumming, Manager, Engineer Design*
- **Updated Accessibility Strategy: Draft Recommendations** (July 15, 2024)— *Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor*

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **HRM Accessibility Strategy** (April 22, 2024) — *Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor*

### 5 Focus Areas:

- Public Transportation
- Built Environment
- Goods & Services
- Information & Communication
- Employment

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **HRM Accessibility Strategy** (April 22, 2024) — *Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor*

### Public Transportation – Key Points

- Barriers to using Halifax Transit, including mobility aid challenges
- Access-A-Bus booking delays and limited ticket purchase locations
- Interest in snow clearance practices and *Moving Forward Together Plan*

### Goods & Services – Key Points

- Improve accessibility in Planning, Development, and public services (e.g. 311, online platforms)
- Align with *Access by Design 2030* and address diverse disability needs (Government of Nova Scotia)

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **HRM Accessibility Strategy** (April 22, 2024) — *Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor*

### **Built Environment – Key Points**

- Improve physical accessibility in public spaces and HRM buildings
- Provide accessibility training for all HRM staff

### **Information & Communication – Key Points**

- Add live chat and use plain, clear language on signage
- Enhance community engagement through social media

### **Employment – Key Points**

- Promote flexible accommodations for staff
- Assign duties based on individual needs

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **Updated Accessibility Strategy: Draft Recommendations** (July 15, 2024)– *Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor*

### Work Plan & Committee Updates

- Discussed early planning for 2025 Work Plan
- May use 2023 Work Plan to guide remainder of 2024
- Requested orientation on meeting procedures and mandate
- Interest in presentations from Parking Services (Feb 2025) and Halifax Transit (Jan 2025)

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **Snow Removal in HRM** (June 3, 2024)– *Steven York, Manager, Winter Operations & Training*

### Winter Operations – Key Topics

- HRM by-laws related to winter operations
- Maintenance of accessible green spaces in winter
- Service standards and upcoming review
- Staffing challenges impacting service delivery

Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- **Temporary Pedestrian Travel Paths**(June 3, August 18, 2024) – *Crysta Cumming, Manager, Engineer Design* (Item deferred to next meeting due to loss of quorum at 6:07 p.m.)

### Key Concerns – Temporary Walkways

- Inaccessible or unsafe pathways at construction sites
- Barriers for wheelchair users and visually impaired individuals
- Poor signage, barricade placement, and uneven surfaces
- Impact on accessible parking and lack of standard enforcement

# Priority 1 con't

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**JOINT PRESENTATIONS**  
**(STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)**

## Priority 1 con't:

# JOINT PRESENTATION S

(STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE  
PUBLIC)

- **Slayter Street and Connections Local Street Bikeway Project** (June 17, 2024)- *Courtney Pyne, Team Lead – Senior Traffic & Transportation Engineer, WSP and Maria Jacobs, Active Transportation Planner*
- **Alderney Drive Functional Plan** (August 6, 2024)- *Courtney Pyne, WSP, Brianna Rietzel, WSP and Maria Jacobs, Active Transportation Planner*
- **Wright's Cove Transit Terminal** (August 6, 2024)- *Alana O'Halloran, Associate, Arcadis, Charlie Hoang, Transit Architecture Lead, Arcadis and Matthew Glynn, Project Manager*

## Priority 1 con't:

# JOINT PRESENTATION S

(STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE  
PUBLIC)

**Slayter Street and Connections Local Street Bikeway Project** (June 17, 2024)- *Courtney Pyne, Team Lead – Senior Traffic & Transportation Engineer, WSP and Maria Jacobs, Active Transportation Planner*

### **Slayter Local Street Bikeway – Project Overview**

- Presented by Maria Jacobs and Courtney Pyne from WSP Canada
- Objective: Develop a functional plan for the Slayter Local Street Bikeway with north, south, and west network connections
- Aim to provide all ages and abilities (AAA) bikeway links connecting North, Central, and Downtown Dartmouth
- Discussed virtual engagement sessions, ashfall vs. gravel use, and completed case studies

## Priority 1 con't:

# JOINT PRESENTATION S

(STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE  
PUBLIC)

- **Alderney Drive Functional Plan** (August 19, 2024)-  
*Courtney Pyne, WSP, Brianna Rietzel, WSP and Maria Jacobs, Active Transportation Planner*

### **Active Transportation – Committee Feedback**

- Preferred structures to separate walkways from busy roads
- Balance between traffic flow and active transportation needs
- Priority for dedicated bus lanes and support for diverse transport modes
- Concerns about lane reductions and safety on multi-use pathways

## Priority 1 con't:

# JOINT PRESENTATION S

(STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE  
PUBLIC)

- **Wright's Cove Transit Terminal** (August 19, 2024)-  
*Alana O'Halloran, Associate, Arcadis, Charlie Hoang, Transit Architecture Lead, Arcadis and Matthew Glynn, Project Manager*

### Terminal Design – Committee Feedback

- Add more seating in designated bays
- Ensure bus schedule text is clear and legible
- Address cigarette litter in planters and designate pick-up/drop-off zones
- Consider sound impacts from glass buildings; explore acoustic paneling

# Priority 2

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AAC Engagement throughout the Municipal  
Budget Planning Process

# Priority 2: AAC Engagement throughout the Municipal Budget Planning Process

## *Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference*

### *Duties of the Committee*

*6. The Committee shall advise Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on matters related to persons with disabilities as follows:*

*(e) advise Council on disability issues that may have an impact on the budget planning process through the Budget Committee of the Whole process.*

- **The AAC was not engaged in the Budget Planning Process**

# Priority 3

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AAC Engagement throughout the Municipal  
Budget Planning Process

## Priority 3: Accessible Parking in the HRM

## STAFF PRESENTATION S

- **We carried this priority from 2023 in February 2025**

### **Accessible Parking in HRM**

- Jeff Nephew, Team Lead Senior Advisor, Parking Planning, gave a presentation
- Provided an overview of accessible parking initiatives in HRM
- Responded to Committee questions and feedback
- Discussion included availability, design, and enforcement of accessible parking spaces

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**Presentations not related to a specific  
priority**

## **Presentations not related to a specific priority**

- **Invisible Disabilities Presentation**  
(February 26) — *Kelsey Green, Complex Trauma Canada*

- **Sail Able Nova Scotia** (February 26) -  
*Kevin Penny and Jamie Rygiel, Sail Able Nova Scotia*

- **HRM's Approach to Homelessness: Planning for Winter and Other Updates (October 7, 2024)**— *Max Chauvin, Director, Housing and Homelessness*

# Presentations not related to a specific priority

## ■ Invisible Disabilities Presentation (February 26) – *Kelsey Green, Complex Trauma Canada*

- The presentation explained that **complex trauma comes from repeated, long-term experiences** like abuse, assault, trafficking, or high-conflict environments.
- It highlighted that **this trauma can severely impact mental, emotional, and physical health**, leading to PTSD, addiction, suicide risk, and nervous system disruption.

## ■ Sail Able Nova Scotia (February 26) - *Kevin Penny and Jamie Rygiel, Sail Able Nova Scotia*

- The presentation highlighted **adaptive sailing opportunities available throughout Nova Scotia**.
- It was noted that **five organizations currently offer sailing programs for persons with disabilities**.

# Presentations not related to a specific priority

- **HRM's Approach to Homelessness: Planning for Winter and Other Updates (October 7, 2024)** – *Max Chauvin, Director, Housing and Homelessness*

## Key Points – Housing & Homelessness Presentations (2023–2024):

- **Ongoing updates and planning** – Max Chauvin, Director of Housing and Homelessness, gave presentations in November 2023 and on October 7, 2024, outlining HRM's winter planning and broader homelessness response.
- **High prevalence of disabilities among the unhoused** – Out of 200 individuals, many reported mental health (67%), cognitive (39%), and brain injury (22%) challenges.
- **Accessibility barriers** – Affordable housing is often in older, inaccessible buildings, and units with supports are too costly for those with low income.
- **Humanitarian focus at the municipal level** – While housing is a provincial responsibility, the municipality provides basic aid to those sleeping rough, many of whom have disabilities.

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# COMMITTEE LED DISCUSSIONS

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- **2023 Town Hall Debrief**
- **Discussion of 2024 Work Plan**
- **Work Plan Discussion**
- **Discussion of 2025 Work Plan**

# Thank you!

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To HRM staff, especially:

- Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor
- Laura Bain, Accessibility Coordinator
- Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant

Thank you  
&  
questions 😊

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