



**Subject:** *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*  
**To:** Corporate and Residential Services Committee  
**Date Prepared:** September 3, 2024  
**Related Motions:** N/A  
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**Approved by:** Kim Ramsay, CAO

### Summary

In September 2022, the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* was enacted by the Province of Nova Scotia. The Act provides strategic direction to address systemic hate, inequity and racism within the Provincial Government. In addition to the Provincial government developing their own strategy, it identifies that prescribed bodies will be required to develop a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism by a prescribed date through Provincial regulations.

In July 2024, the Nova Scotia government established regulations to support the Act. The regulations state that Municipalities are a prescribed body and the prescribed date for a plan to be developed is April 1, 2025. This date coincides with the required 3-year review cycle for Council's Accessibility Plan.

This report provides an overview of the existing and new legislation, our current state and preliminary path forward to meet the Regulations.

### Financial Impact Statement

A key requirement to advance multiple actions in the Accessibility Plan is to complete accessibility audits of our facilities. The standard for this is the Rick Hansen Foundation audit tool and a municipal staff member has been trained to conduct these audits. With competing priorities in Building Inspection, consideration for additional funds for contracting out the audits or offsetting the building inspection priorities would enable the audits to be completed in advance of April 1, 2025.

It is estimated that completing the audits using an external contractor would be \$30,000 and it would include the Lloyd E. Matheson Centre, East Hants Aquatic Centre, East Hants Sportsplex, Waste Management Centre, Burntcoat Head Park and Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre.

### Recommendation

To establish a budget of \$30,000 from Professional Fees reserve for an external party to complete accessibility audits of the Lloyd E. Matheson Centre, East Hants Aquatic Centre, East Hants Sportsplex, Waste Management Centre, Burntcoat Head Park and Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre.

### Recommended Motion

***Move that the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend that Council approve \$30,000.00 from Professional Services Reserve to have an external party complete accessibility audits of the Lloyd E. Matheson Centre, East Hants Aquatic Centre, East Hants Sportsplex, Waste Management Centre, Burntcoat Head Park and Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre to support updates required under the Accessibility Plan and Dismantling Hate and Anti-Racism Act;***

*And that, Council direct staff to include an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion component in the community engagement taking place as part of the Recreation Facilities Master Plan exercise.*

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## Background

The 2019 *Accessibility Act* and Regulations required prescribed bodies (municipalities) to create a plan by April 2021. This deadline was later extended by the Province to 2022. East Hants Council adopted their Accessible East Hants Plan in 2021 and Council established an Accessibility Advisory Committee as a requirement under the Act.

In 2021, Council approved the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. This framework is designed to assist the department in creating a diverse and inclusive environment for programs and services to our residents. The strategy identifies guiding principles, objectives and examples of initiatives that would be carried out by the PRC department.

The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* was enacted in 2022. The Regulations to support the Act were passed in July 2024. The Regulations establish that Municipalities are a prescribed body and are required to complete a plan by April 2025. A Council committee is not required under the Act.

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## Discussion

### Equity and Anti-Racism Plan Requirements

The plan is an opportunity to share publicly the organization's commitment to equity and anti-racism. Equity and anti-racism plans must be:

- informed by engagement with underrepresented and underserved communities that the plan covers;
- in place by April 1, 2025;
- publicly available in an accessible format; and
- updated every three years, in line with Accessibility Act requirement.

In July 2024, in conjunction with the establishment of the Regulations the Province released an equity and anti-racism self-assessment tool. This tool self-assesses 12 different organizational characteristics. Through the support of the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) staff an internal session was held with the leadership team, Accessibility staff, and Human Resources to complete the tool.

The tool provides a snapshot of current state and through the discussion, evidence is identified on how the organization fulfills the indicator, identifies barriers and opportunities to strive towards. It provides a self-reflection on the positive achievements occurring in the workplace through policy, process or other and a potential roadmap for plan development. Staff intend to utilize the tool as the basis for the establishment of framework to develop a plan. Given the importance of this work, there is value in taking the appropriate amount of time to do it correctly. Staff have concerns about the timeline established by the Provincial regulations and the resources required to do the work in a meaningful way.

In fall of 2024, staff will be completing an engagement process to gather community data that will support the development of a Recreation Facilities Master Plan. There is significant overlap with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the services provided through the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. The engagement plan will include an EDI component that will support input for both the Facilities Master Plan and Equity and Anti-Racism Plan.

### Accessible East Hants Plan 2021-2024

The plan was adopted by Council in 2021. An action item for the plan included the undertaking of facility audits for accessibility. This action item has yet to be completed.

It was anticipated this work would be completed by an internal staff member (Building Inspector). Due to the development growth of the community, this has not been able to be advanced. We have used this skillset for one off accessibility questions and renovation projects. As this is a priority item in the plan, it is recommended that this be resourced through external sources. This action item will help inform Council with evidence-based data in their making process.

The Plan identifies the following buildings:

- Lloyd E. Matheson Centre
- East Hants Aquatic Centre
- Municipal tourism properties - Burntcoat Head Park and the Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre
- Waste Management Centre

At the time of the development of the Plan, the East Hants Sportsplex was not under Municipal ownership and operations. The Sportsplex would be a critical facility to have audited and would be added to the list.

Based on the recommended budget staff will prioritize the large 3 public facilities (EHAC, LEMC, Sportsplex) to be completed first. As funding allows the remaining will be completed and prioritized in the 2025/2026 budget process.

#### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Council's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan

**Goal:** Our goal is to provide infrastructure that addresses the needs of our growing community.

**Objective:** Build infrastructure that meets new regulatory requirements and positions the municipality to provide accessible and sustainable services while accommodating growth.

**Goal:** Our goal is to provide greater value to the community by improving the way we do business.

**Objective:** Improve the accessibility of municipal information, facilities, programs and services.

There are various example initiatives including revisions to our new municipal website, accessible features in the aquatic centre as well as park features like accessible walkways and playground equipment.

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- *Accessibility Act 2019*
- *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022*

These acts are law. The supporting Regulations for the Act do not tell the municipality how to meet the legislation.

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## Alternatives

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## Attachments