



**Subject:** *Equitable East Hants Plan*  
**To:** Corporate and Residential Services Committee  
**Date Prepared:** March 6, 2025  
**Related Motions:** C24(297)  
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**Approved by:** Kim Ramsay, CAO

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### Summary

In September 2024, the Corporate and Residential Services Committee was provided an overview of the “Dismantling Racism and Hate Act”. The provincial legislation requires municipalities to create a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism. Staff drafted a plan penned as “Equitable East Hants” for Council’s consideration.

### Financial Impact Statement

There is no direct financial impact to the adoption of this plan. Action items to meet the objectives during the 3-year cycle of the plan will be included in staff workplans with any financial impacts being brought forward to Council for future discussion and approval at budget time.

### Recommendation

That the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council the adoption of this plan.

### Recommended Motion

*That the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommends to Council the adoption of the Equitable East Hants Plan as attached to the Executive Committee agenda dated March 18, 2025.*

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### Background

In September 2022, the Province of Nova Scotia enacted the “Dismantling Racism and Hate Act” (the Act), which provides strategic direction for addressing systemic racism, hate and inequity within the Provincial Government. The Act requires certain organizations to create plans to address these issues by a specific deadline as stated in Provincial regulations.

In July 2024, the Nova Scotia government introduced regulations to support the Act. These regulations set the deadline for Municipalities to create a plan by April 1, 2025, matching the 3-year review cycle for Municipal Accessibility Plans.

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## Discussion

### Plan development

To develop this plan, the following steps were taken:

#### Self-Assessment & Internal Reflection

- The Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) facilitated a session with East Hants staff, using a self-assessment tool developed by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism.
- This helped evaluate the Municipality's strengths in promoting equity and anti-racism and identified areas for improvement.

#### Alignment with Council's Strategic Goals

- The East Hants Strategic Plan was reviewed to make sure that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) efforts match the Municipality's main priorities.
- Approved by Council, the strategic plan helps guide decisions and services, showing the Municipality's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

#### East Hants Staff Engagement

- Input was gathered from the Municipality's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Human Resources staff and the leadership team to ensure the plan reflects internal perspectives, operational realities and best practices in workplace equity.

#### Community Engagement

- During the EDI plan development, a public recreation survey had launched to gather community feedback. While focused from a recreation perspective, the survey does include an opportunity for overlap of EDI engagement questions.
- Due to of timing, the results won't be finalized before the plan is submitted by the April 1, 2025 deadline, but the findings will help inform the implementation of the EDI plan's goals and objectives.

#### Ongoing Engagement & Future Actions

- The Municipality understands effective EDI efforts need ongoing involvement and is committed to working with underrepresented and underserved communities during the plan's three-year cycle.
- Ongoing dialogue and collaboration will be key to ensuring that this plan remains responsive, inclusive and impactful.

### Progress on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- East Hants has made significant strides in fostering an inclusive and equitable community with a series of key initiatives that demonstrate our ongoing commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion.
- These initiatives are listed in the plan as a way to celebrate and create awareness of the work that has been supported by Council on this topic.

### Plan Priority Areas

East Hants has identified three priority areas to guide us through this journey with objectives listed under each goal within the plan:

1. Equity and Anti-Racism in Service Delivery - to ensure that public services and programs are respectful and inclusive to all community members.
2. Equity and Anti-Racism Policy Review - to create policies that speak directly to Equity and Anti-Racism and include updates to existing policies with an equity and anti-racism lens.

3. Equity and Anti-Racism Training and Education - to increase staff and Council awareness of the cultural diversity of our Municipality and to reflect the diversity of our community in all that we do.

#### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This plan has been developed in alignment with Council's strategic plan.

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Provincial legislation requires municipalities to develop a plan by April 1, 2025 with Council having the authority to adopt the plan.

#### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct financial considerations attached to this plan.

The goals and objectives identified in the plan are manageable within the three-year period of the plan. If initiatives that come out of the plan have a financial impact, this would be brought forward during the annual budget process.

Council should be aware that increasing requirements under provincial legislation for both the "Accessibility Act" and "Dismantling Racism and Hate Act" create resourcing pressures for municipalities. The adoption of this plan does not commit Council to future resources, however as Council moves forward to meet the various legislations it does create resourcing pressures to ensure this is done well and in a meaningful way.

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### Alternatives

Council may choose to provide input on what has been presented.

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### Attachments

Equitable East Hants - draft plan