



**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES
October 29, 2025**

PRESENT: Rachele Manett, Chair
Nikolas Harris, Vice Chair
Councillor Jean St-Amand
Glenn Babcock
Oliver Keith
Anne Sinclair
Jamil Sinno
Cathi Stevenson

REGRETS: Councillor Laura White
Councillor Trish Purdy
Céline Vautour

STAFF: Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor
Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant

These minutes are considered draft and will require approval by the Accessibility Advisory Committee at a future meeting.

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people.

2. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Councillor St-Amand, seconded by Anne Sinclair

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

4. Review of Winter Operations Services Standards - *Stephanie Howatt, Deloitte*

The following was before the Committee:

- Correspondence from Sara Kirk
- Handout dated October 29, 2025

Stephanie Howatt, Consultant, Deloitte spoke to the participation guide that was distributed as a handout and provided an overview of Halifax Regional Municipality's ongoing review of Winter Operations Services Standards. Howatt noted the last review was undertaken in 2020 and spoke to the findings and recommendations outlined in the Auditor General's report "Management of Winter Operations Audit". Howatt posed a series of questions to the Committee and requested feedback.

On the topic of *Understanding current winter operations*, the Committee noted:

- A degree of satisfaction with the service standards this past winter;
- The impacts of weather patterns that result in freezing and thawing on roads;
- Concerns with the amount of salt being used during winter operations;
- The negative impacts of salts on sidewalk and road conditions;
- Concerns with municipal staff not monitoring the work completed by contractors;
- The need to prioritize the clearance of single access roads, particularly in rural communities; and
- Current services standards not prioritizing accessibility.

On the topic of *Impacts on Community, Equity, and Accessibility*, the Committee noted:

- Concerns with green bins and trash cans not being left close enough to homes during winter months;
- Issues with snow clearing practices not adequately reflecting current service standards;
- Snow being cleared into on-street accessible parking spaces which render the parking spaces unusable;
- The inaccessibility of community spaces and greenspaces during winter months;
- The importance of preventing falls, injury and disability due to winter conditions;
- Accessibility not being incorporated or prioritized in current service standards;
- The role of accessibility in risk prevention;
- The need for a proactive rather than a reactive approach;
- Concerns with accessibility considerations being seen as a separate or secondary consideration;

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- The need to involve people with disabilities during the development process;
- Inherent restrictions in explaining restrictions and accessibility challenges in consultation sessions; and
- The benefits of holding a walkthrough to show accessible challenges.

On the topic of *Communication, Reporting, and Priorities*, the Committee noted the following:

- The need to improve the how service standards are communicated to the public;
- The importance of adequately communicating how to report issues with service standards;
- The value in using plain language; and
- Adequately explaining the rationale when prioritizing or servicing certain areas during winter operations.

On the topic of *Future Planning*, the Committee noted:

- The need for Halifax Regional Council to potentially change their approach to winter operations;
- The value in considering more environmentally friendly alternatives to salt;
- The need for transparency and publicly available data concerning how well winter service standards are being met; and
- The benefits of mandating accessible considerations into processes.

Howatt responded to questions of clarification from the Committee and noted plans to send interactive service standards maps to the Legislative Assistant for distribution to the Committee.

Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant responded to questions of clarification from the Committee.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Elizabeth Macdonald
Legislative Assistant