



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information X	Recommendation ☐	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: Committee of the Whole

Submitted by: _____
Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning and Development

Date: 2025-01-13

Subject: 2025 Development Activity in West Hants Regional Municipality

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

N/A

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

This report is being provided for information purposes only.

BACKGROUND

Property X	Public Opinion ☐	Environment X	Social ☐	Economic ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of major land use planning and development activity in 2025. The report summarizes key metrics related to planning applications, subdivisions, new residential units, and permits, and highlights notable trends affecting growth within the municipality.

A version of this report was also presented to the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee on January 8th, 2026.

DISCUSSION

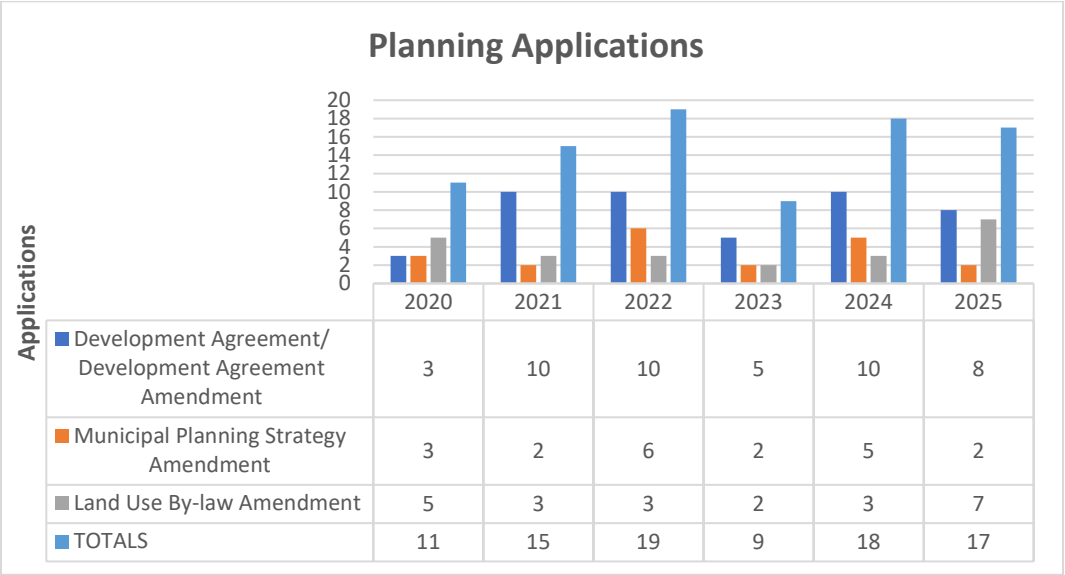
In 2025, West Hants Regional Municipality experienced continued development activity with a strong emphasis on residential growth. Planning applications as well as as-of-right developments supported the creation of new housing units. While activity remained consistent with recent years, processing volumes reflected ongoing housing demand, pressure on municipal infrastructure, and evolving policies and regulations.

Planning Applications:

Throughout 2025, the Planning and Development Department received a total of 15 completed planning applications, many of which we’re brought forward for recommendation and approval to PAC/HAC and Council. Planning applications include development agreements, development agreement amendments (substantive and non-substantive), land use by-law amendments (rezoning and text amendments) as well and municipal planning strategy amendments. The department can also accept and process amendments to the subdivisions by-laws, however this is not reflected in the chart below as the department has not processed an amendment in the last 5 years. This is not atypical as amendments to the subdivision by-law are rarer, as this by-law is largely influenced by provincial regulations.

Also not represented in the table was a single site plan approval application that was approved in early 2025 for a new large format retail store in Windsor. This was the first site plan approval completed post-consolidation.

As shown in the chart below, planning application have remained steady over the last 5 years. Applications typically take 6-8 months from intake to final decision by Council; however, this timeline varies based on the complexity of the application. For example, many development agreements can take longer as they often require more detailed studies, negotiations, and reviews.



Subdivision Activity:

In 2025, there were approximately 54 subdivision applications for final subdivisions with approximately 66 new lots created from 37 of those applications. Several of the subdivision

applications were for consolidation or boundary adjustments and therefore did not result in a new lot being created. These numbers are approximate as our TownSuite Permitting software system does not currently track all subdivision applications as in early 2025 there were several applications that were not recorded digitally into the system. In 2026, the department plans on updating subdivision filing and tracking using the TownSuite software to be able to better analyze subdivision data year over year.

3 Hantsport (2 new lots), 3 in Windsor (2 new lots) and the remaining 48 in West Hants (62 new lots). It is also worth noting that there were two tentative approvals for 52 additional lots in Windsor and Falmouth. Additionally, \$90,425 was paid to the municipality as cash in lieu of dedicating parkland.

These newly created lots will enable development and building permits and will contribute to future growth in the upcoming years.

Permit and Housing Unit Activity:

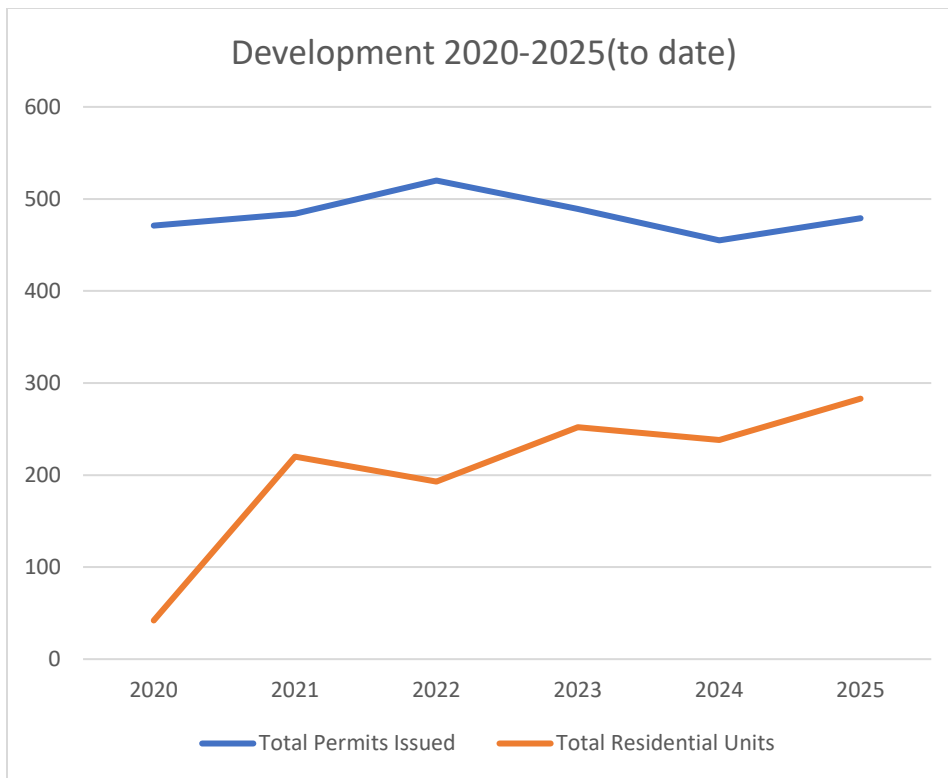
Building permit activity in 2025 reflected the implementation of previously approved planning applications as well as increased development opportunities through recent Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law amendments that allow greater density as-of-right, with permits issued for 283 new residential dwelling units. Permit volumes indicate steady construction activity and progress towards translating planning approvals into delivered housing, increased employment and commercial opportunities within the municipality.

As shown in the charts below, there has been a steady increase in new residential units coming on board in WHRM since 2020. Residential growth continues to be the main type of growth in the municipality, with some commercial and industrial activity. Industrial activity, as well as increased value of construction, is largely attributed to wind farm developments. There was a distinct jump in construction value in 2025, and this was largely attributed to wind turbine permits valued at \$45,000,000.00. The total value of construction without the wind turbines is \$166,229,000.00.

In terms of new residential units, most new units were for single detached housing (49%) and apartments (41%) with the remaining being new duplex/semi-detached units (10%).

Development and Building Permit Data: 2020-2025 (As of December 30th, 2025)						
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Residential	215	245	294	255	258	252
Other residential	205	187	175	171	128	178
Commercial	27	27	27	28	35	22
Industrial	3	7	4	7	9	4
Institutional	5	6	8	6	7	11
Agriculture	14	8	8	17	14	12
Other	2	4	5	5	4	0

Total Permits Issued	471	484	520	489	455	479
Total Residential Units	42	220	193	252	238	283
Total Est. Value of Construction	\$32,658,053	\$67,372,050	\$60,326,938	\$148,731,636	\$75,000,346	\$211,229,000



Major Projects:

The Department is still undertaking a comprehensive Plan Review to update and consolidate its planning documents, reflecting changes in environmental, social, and economic conditions. This initiative encompasses the communities of Hantsport, Windsor, and West Hants, each previously governed by separate planning strategies and land use by-laws.

This major project includes:

- Document Consolidation:
 - Merge the planning documents of Hantsport, Windsor, and West Hants into a unified framework.
- Policy Updates:

- Revise policies to address current and anticipated environmental, social, and economic trends.
- Public Engagement:
 - Incorporate community feedback to ensure the revised planning documents align with residents' needs and aspirations.

Recently the drafts have been made publicly available and shared with stakeholders for final feedback prior to being presented to PAC/HAC and Council. The goal is to wrap up the project in 2026 and begin the implementation of the new plans.

Another major project the Department is working on is the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). In March 2024, the municipality entered into an agreement under HAF, securing over \$1 million to eliminate barriers to housing development. Department is playing a crucial role in implementing 7 initiatives to enable diverse housing forms and densities, streamline permit approvals, identifying underdeveloped land, and review bylaws to remove barriers to housing development. One of the initiatives is complete, 4 are complete and the final 3 are being wrapped up in early 2026. The Public Works Department are using additional funds to complete an Integrated Resource Plan which will help inform future decision making around development and infrastructure within the municipality.

Anticipated Development:

With the continuing increase in residential units since 2020, it is reasonable to assume the municipality will continue to see over 200 new units per year especially with the steady number of planning applications coming in year-over-year. There are several active development agreements in place, especially for new residential developments, that are either under construction and not fully built-out or have not commenced yet. These development areas could see activity within the next 5-10 years.

The department has also seen an increase in interest in construction non-market affordable housing units within the municipality; constructed by the province or through support from CMHC or provincial programs. The department hopes to see this trend continue and hopes to continue to explore ways the municipality can support these initiatives.

In July 2025, a progress report to Council from Planner Will Hong demonstrated the impacts of recent Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives on housing development. The report demonstrated the almost immediate impact of the project on housing, including increased development activity from greater density as-of-right amendments. The Department anticipates this as a continuing trend in the community.

Population Growth:

In 2023 the municipality completed a Housing Needs Report which identifies current and future housing needs and any gaps in housing supply. The report also details high-level population projections. The report states that the municipality grew by 3% between 2016-2021 (based on the 2021 Federal Census data) and states that the Finance and Treasury Board (FTB) estimates projects that municipality will grow by 4% between 2022-2027. The 2021 census recorded a

population of 19, 509 and an average household size of 2.3 persons per household. At a 4% increase in the population between 2022-2027, the municipality could expect that the population could grow to approximately 20,300 people, with approximately 150 newcomers per year.

The municipality plans to update the Housing Needs Report in 2026-2027 as a requirement of the Housing Accelerator Fund agreement, and at that time new data will be available. Ideally this report will include up to date population statistics from the May 2026 Federal Census, however this will be dependent on data availability.

NEXT STEPS

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

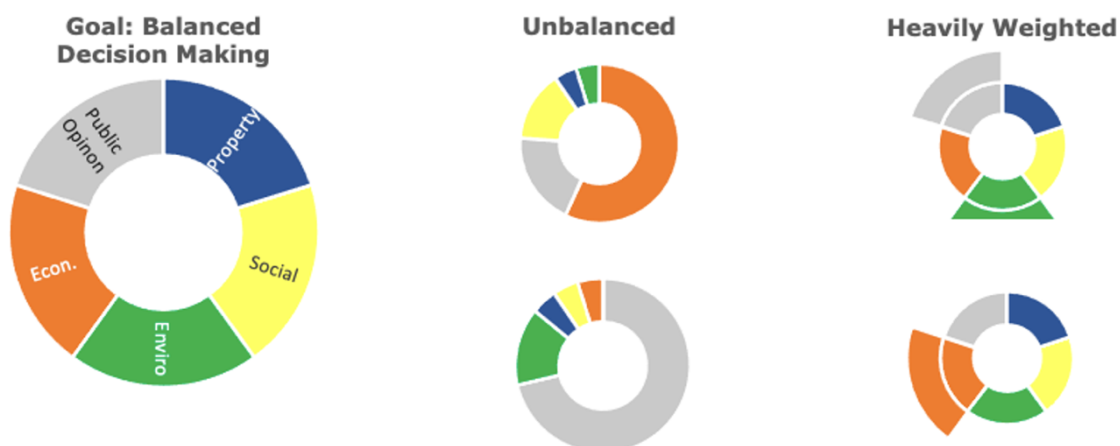
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ATTACHMENTS

None.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

Council has been provided with a reference taken from the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy , Appendix C “Decision Making by Council and Committee of the Whole” as a reminder of the principles highlighted for good decision making.



(For use if report is from a Councillor. CAO to provide additional comments on background, department/staff responsible and workload, budget, options, preferred strategy. State “Not Applicable” if report is from staff which already incorporates CAO review.)

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