



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☒	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: Mayor Zebian and Members of West Hants Regional Municipal Council

Submitted by: _____
Sara Poirier, Director of Planning and Development

Date: 2026-07-14

Subject: Change in Scope: RFP - Consultant Services to Complete Municipal Planning Document Review

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 65 of the Municipal Government Act

Part VIII, Planning and Development, of the Municipal Government Act

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

It is recommended for Committee of the Whole to recommend to Council that:

...Council approves the additional budget of \$38,490.00 plus HST for WSP Canada Inc. to complete the change in scope in relation to the Request for Proposals # WHRMPD23-04, Consultant Services to Complete Municipal Planning Document Review.

BACKGROUND

Property ☒	Public Opinion ☐	Environment ☒	Social ☒	Economic ☒	Councillor Activity ☐
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On June 27, 2023, Council approved the motion to *“provide planning staff the capacity to engage consultants for furthering the process of the Plan Review for West Hants Regional Municipality.”*

On November 28, 2023 Council approved the award of the Request for Proposals # WHRMPD23-04, Consultant Services to Complete Municipal Planning Document Review, to

WSP Canada Inc. in the amount of \$192,480.00 plus 10% contingency and applicable taxes. This budget has been exhausted as WSP Canada Inc. completed the scope of their original contract excluding the final Public Hearing and Council Second Reading presentation. The 10% contingency went towards additional versions of the draft documents which were not in the original scope of work. These additional drafts were required based on additional changes to the documents as a result of engagement efforts as well as additional policy considerations from staff such as updated stormwater management policies.

Based on an informal request from a member of the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee (PAC/HAC), staff conducted an information session with the Committee on May 14th, 2026. Staff presented a summary of the major, substantive changes that the draft documents are proposing and allowed the Committee the opportunity to discuss, ask questions to staff, and provide feedback without a formal recommendation in front of them.

At the June 9th, 2026 PAC/HAC meeting, staff presented recommendations to proceed with First Reading and schedule a Public Hearing for the new Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Land Use By-law (LUB) and Subdivision By-law (SUB). The Committee defeated these recommendations and instead passed a motion requesting additional time for staff to create additional documents that show all the changes made to create the Regional planning documents and for staff to host an additional workshop with the Committee to review all the changes and rationale.

On June 23, 2026, Council made the motion to direct staff to provide additional information identifying the changes proposed in the new Regional planning documents and host subsequent workshops with the PAC/HAC and Council.

The original budget awarded for the RFP has been exhausted. The Planning and Development Department has allocated \$5,000 for the MPS/LUB review in the 2026-27 Operating Budget for WSP Canada Inc. to complete the final stages of planning document approval with Council. This budget will not cover this change in scope.

The quote received by WSP Canada Inc. for the additional work was \$38,490 plus HST and could be funded by the Housing Accelerator Funding.

DISCUSSION

All the areas of the Municipality are planned. The first land use regulations were in place in Windsor and a portion of West Hants in 1976; by 1994 regulations were in place throughout the former Municipal units.

The Town of Hantsport dissolved into the Municipality of West Hants in 2015, but the community of Hantsport still has its own planning documents. The Town of Windsor consolidated with the Municipality of West Hants in 2020, but the community of Windsor and the former Municipality of West Hants still have their own planning documents.

The current planning documents were last reviewed in totality in 2005 (Windsor), 2008 (West Hants) and in 2010 (Hantsport). The planning documents have undergone a number of amendments since then. With all of the documents being over 15 years old, a thorough review of all the policies and regulations is required.

In 2016, the Municipality of the District of West Hants Council and the Planning and Development Department initiated the process of reviewing the MPS, LUB and SUB for the Municipality of West Hants and the former Town of Hantsport.

In April 2020, the Municipality of the District of West Hants and Town of Windsor consolidated to form West Hants Regional Municipality. Planning and Development Department staff included the Windsor planning documents in the review at that time.

To support the plan review staff created the following material:

- Existing Land Use Survey mapping in 2018;
- Background reports;
- Public Engagement Meetings: What We Heard reports documenting the 15 public engagement sessions and 2 youth engagement sessions between October 2018 and January 2020 (Windsor 2022);
- Direct comparison of the three existing sets of documents; and
- General policies/some regulations (including definitions) accepted by the PAC/HAC for inclusion in the draft MPS and LUB.

Since engaging WSP Canada Inc., staff and WSP have completed several phases of work including:

- Background research;
- Online visioning survey from March 28, 2024 – April 17, 2024 with 279 responses;
- Public Open Houses: project introduction on March 27, 2024, key changes to the draft documents on June 2 (virtual), 3 and 5, 2025;
- Stakeholder workshop on March 25, 2024;
- Council engagement: October 1, 2024 and September 18, 2025;
- PAC/HAC engagement: March 18, 2024, Growth Centres report on March 13, 2025, and information session for the final drafts on May 14, 2026;
- Project website updates including draft documents available for review in January 2026;
- Preliminary review by the Province of Nova Scotia received March 18, 2026; and
- Preparation of draft policy documents.

Direction from Council

On June 23, 2026, Council made the motion to direct staff to provide additional information identifying the changes proposed in the new Regional planning documents and host subsequent workshops with the PAC/HAC and Council. This is additional work outside of the original scope of work requested and exceeds the remaining operating budget allowance, therefore a formal change in scope and additional budget is required to continue to retain WSP Canada Inc. for this project.

Staff requested a quote from WSP Canada Inc. to determine the cost of:

- Creating a more robust summary of changes document highlighting the major changes and intent of the MPS, LUB and SUB (Note – this would build from the summary document already provided to the PAC/HAC in May and would not be a track-change level document);
- Creating materials for the workshop(s) with PAC/HAC and Council;
- Hosting the workshop in-person with PAC/HAC and Council (1 full day with alternative additional full day if needed);
- Finalizing the documents following any discussion from the workshop(s); and
- Leading presentations to PAC/HAC for recommendation, Council First Reading and Council Public Hearing / Second Reading.

The quote received by WSP Canada Inc. for the additional work was \$38,490 plus HST.

WSP Canada Inc. has confirmed that if they continue to be engaged for this project, they will have a more robust summary document prepared this summer and be able to host a workshop(s) with PAC/HAC and Council as early as September. This would be ideal timing as membership for PAC/HAC is up for renewal in October.

Planning and Development Department

The Planning and Development Department currently has limited capacity to be able to complete this work in-house. The Planners are focusing on daily inquiries, on-going planning applications and implementing the Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives due to funding deadlines. The Department also currently has a vacancy for a Manager of Planning.

If staff were to complete the additional work requested by Council, I anticipate the documentation would not be prepared until spring 2027 with a workshop to follow. Following a workshop, staff would then prepare amendments to the drafts and bring them forward for recommendation from PAC/HAC and a decision by Council. This approval process will take an additional few months at a minimum. Additionally, this would only happen if the volume of planning applications slow down.

Staff Recommendation

This project is an important next step post-consolidation and given the project has been on-going for several years, staff do not recommend delaying a decision on the draft documents an additional year based on several factors including:

- The draft documents will help improve internal workflows and allow staff time and resources to focus on other major projects and initiatives such as coastal planning;
- These documents also allow staff to respond to new priorities such as stormwater management, solar energy, development pressures in areas such as Three Mile Plains, and other important priorities;
- Any major change to the existing drafts may also trigger additional public engagement which would add additional scope for staff; and
- The current draft documents have already been reviewed by the Province. The documents were sent to the Department of Municipal Affairs and circulated to additional departments for specific comments from subject matter experts. Staff would recommend reengaging with the Province should major changes be made to the drafts which would add time and uncertainty to the project.

Given the points above, staff would recommend continuing to work with WSP Canada Inc. so that this additional project scope can be completed in a timely manner given limited resources in the Department and to ensure continued momentum with such an important project for WHRM.

NEXT STEPS

Pending approval of Council; staff would continue to engage WSP Canada Inc. in completing the planning document review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In November 2023, WSP Canada Inc. was awarded the contract in the amount of \$192,480.00 plus 10% contingency and applicable taxes. This budget and contingency have been exhausted as WSP Canada Inc. completed the scope of their original contract excluding the final Public Hearing and Council Second Reading presentation.

The Planning and Development Department allocated \$5,000 for the MPS/LUB review in the 2026-27 Operating Budget for WSP Canada Inc. to complete the final stages of planning document approval with Council. The operating budget will not have capacity to cover this change in scope.

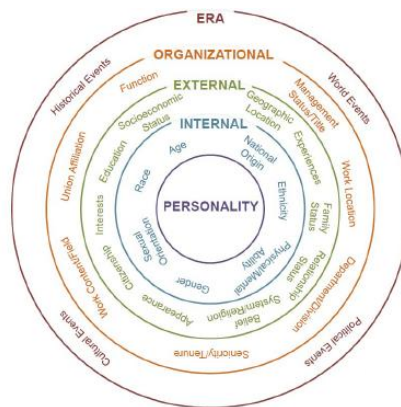
Financial:

Quote Pricing	\$38,490.00
Non-Recoverable Tax (3.86%)	\$1,485.71
Total	\$39,975.71
Funding	
Housing Accelerator Funding	\$39,975.71

The proposed change in scope will be covered by the Housing Accelerator Funding, under action item associated plan review consultant.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility considerations were integrated into the development of the proposed planning documents through a focus on housing diversity, accessibility, active transportation, community connectivity and servicing. Public engagement activities were designed to provide multiple opportunities for participation and to inform the policy framework through a variety of community perspectives.



ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may choose not to support the recommendation.

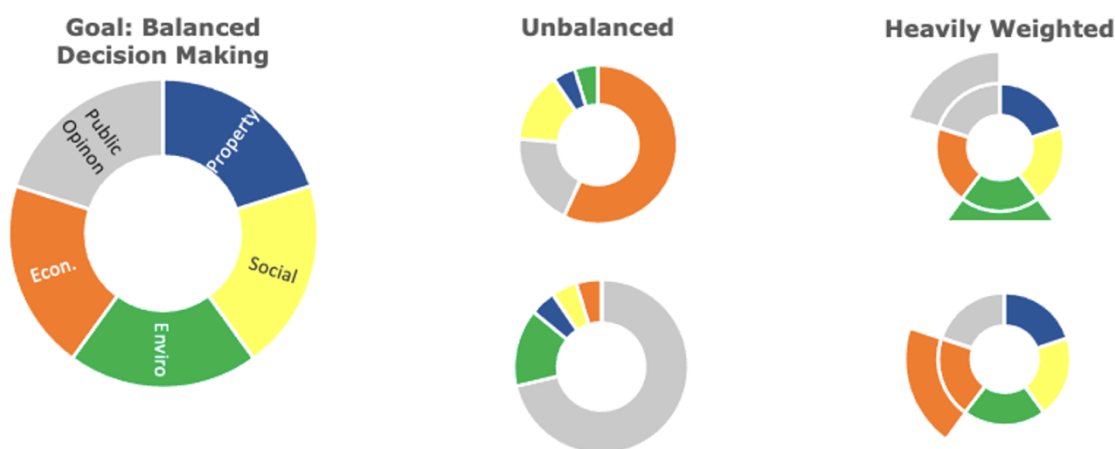
ATTACHMENTS

- 2023-11-14 RFP Award: Consultant Services to Complete Municipal Planning Document Review
- 2026-06-23 West Hants Regional Municipality Plan Review

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

The rationale for the recommendation, specifically the use of WSP to complete this work, is provided in the report. The Director and I have discussed the staffing levels and current work demands of the Planning Department. To ensure a timely review of the drafts at the level of detail requested, to maintain the collective memory of the engagement sessions influencing the changes and to ensure a timely decision-making process for document approval I support the Director's request.

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.



Report Prepared by: Sara Poirier
Sara Poirier, Director of Planning and Development

Report Reviewed by: _____
Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services

Report Approved by: [Signature]
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer