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Item No. 15.1.1
Halifax Regional Council
May 13, 2025

TO: Mayor Andy Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Sidewalks and On-Road Multi-Use Pathways in Rural Centres
Public Engagement Results and Next Steps

ORIGIN

Item No. 15.1.1 Halifax Regional Council Meeting from February 7, 2023: Recommendation Report Active Transportation Priorities Plan Amendments - Rural Active Transportation Infrastructure¹

Administrative Order Respecting the Implementation of Area Rates to Fund Sidewalks Outside of the Urban Tax Area in the Halifax Regional Municipality (referred further as AO 2022-008-ADM)².

Item 15.3.1 Halifax Regional Council Meeting from August 6, 2024 – Recommendation Report: Supporting the Hubbards Community Plan³

Motion by Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee:

"That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:

1. Consider the proposed active transportation facilities in the Hubbards Community Plan when:

- a. implementing the Rural Active Transportation Program, and*
- b. identifying potential projects in the multi-year Capital Plan; "*

Item No. 15.1.7 Halifax Regional Council November 23, 2021

"It is recommended that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

- 1. Initiate a process to consider amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw for Eastern Shore West to ensure development provisions for commercial, industrial, institutional, open space and recreational uses are compatible with the village core and support carrying out the Musquodoboit Harbour Community Vision and Community Development Plan;*

[...]

- 4. Explore funding options from other levels of government for the capital cost of sidewalk infrastructure."*

Item No. 15.2.2 Halifax Regional Council Meeting from January 9, 2024: Rural Recreation Strategy⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 3

¹ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230207rc1511.pdf>

² <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2022-008-adm.pdf>

³ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240806rc1531.pdf>

⁴ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240109rc1522.pdf>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes public engagement results (details in Attachment 2- What We've Heard Report) on a new area rate to make prioritized rural communities eligible for sidewalks or on-road multi-use pathways (MUP) on their mainstreets, and outlines proposed next steps based on these findings and further analysis.

Following recommendations from the 2014 *Active Transportation Priorities Plan* and the 2017 *Integrated Mobility Plan*, Council approved the Rural Active Transportation Program in 2022 to direct consideration for sidewalks in 17 rural communities.

Subsection 94(1) of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* allows for Council to set separate tax rates for urban, suburban and rural tax areas based on level of service. Currently, suburban and rural areas pay a lower rate and are not eligible for sidewalks.

To address sidewalk eligibility in rural communities and align with HRM's taxation, Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM⁵, approved in early 2023, set the area rate as "*the difference between the general tax rate and service delivery in in the urban tax boundary and suburban and rural tax boundary.*" This rate requires approval "*by resolution of Council, at its sole discretion, pursuant to the HRM Charter*" based on the proposed community boundary, rationale, and community engagement results. The difference is \$0.033 per \$100 of assessed property tax value.

East Preston has already been approved at this rate and first segment of MUP was built in 2024.

Five candidate communities (Porters Lake, Musquodoboit Harbour, Upper Tantallon, Hubbards and Lucasville) were prioritized for public engagement based on Council approved criteria. Public engagement in these communities took place in winter and spring 2024. The results showed broad opposition to HRM's rationale for the area rate. At least 50% of respondents in each community opposing sidewalks cited "taxes" and "rate" as reasons.

Porters Lake and Upper Tantallon strongly opposed all engagement components, while Musquodoboit Harbour and Lucasville were moderately opposed to sidewalks and strongly opposed to the area rate. Hubbards (not including adjacent communities) showed strong support for sidewalks and about 65%⁶ showed support for the area rate. Lucasville community groups requested exemption from the area rate due to past and current inequities in service and planning (details in Discussion Section- 2.4.1).

Based on this feedback, alternative options for calculating an area rate were considered. Two options given the most consideration were a variable rate option tied directly to recovering annual maintenance costs and a fixed rate option focused on making communities eligible for the infrastructure that is based on estimated annual maintenance costs for four of the communities.

The recommended approach is a new fixed rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property values.

If support is received from Regional Council to update the area rate as proposed, these are the next steps for council consideration:

- Amend the Administrative Order and return to Council for consideration.
- Round two of community engagement in Musquodoboit Harbour and Lucasville on the new area rate
- Return to respective Community Councils with recommendations for Regional Council to consider approval of the updated area rate for Hubbards, Musquodoboit Harbour, Lucasville and East Preston.

As well, it is proposed that HRM:

- Begin functional planning and design for sidewalk facilities in Hubbards.
- Discontinue consideration of an area rate and sidewalks in Porters Lake and Upper Tantallon.

⁵ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2022-008-adm.pdf>

⁶ 44% in support (or support but concerned) of the area rate in all Hubbards Preliminary Community Boundary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to:

1. Prepare amendments to Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, *the Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order*, to implement a fixed area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value for sidewalks in rural communities and come back to Council for approval.
2. Pending adoption of the amendments to Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, conduct further public engagement in Musquodoboit Harbour and Lucasville to understand their position on a new approach to an area rate.
3. Begin functional planning for the priority segment of sidewalk in Hubbards and return to North West Community Council with a recommendation on area rate and an area rate boundary for the community of Hubbards.
4. De-prioritize planning for sidewalks in Upper Tantallon and Porters Lake in response to the community engagement feedback.

BACKGROUND

This section provides background information on the following:

1. the policy and planning context for this project,
2. the history of providing active transportation infrastructure in rural HRM; and,
3. the new Rural Active Transportation Program.

1. Policy and Planning Context

Halifax Regional Council is required to set separate rates based on levels of service pursuant to the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* Subsection 94(1): “*The Council shall separate commercial and residential tax rates for the area of the Municipality determined by the Council to be:*

- a) *a rural area receiving a rural level of services;*
- b) *a suburban area receiving a suburban level of services; and*
- c) *an urban area receiving an urban level of services”.*

In the current taxation practice, suburban area and rural area⁷ residential and resource properties pay the same [general tax rate](#)⁸ (\$0.626 per \$100 of taxable value) and have the same eligibility for services. Urban areas pay \$0.659 per \$100 of taxable value. If the general tax rate is increased to fund new projects, the difference of \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value is always maintained. Tax areas for commercial properties are mapped separately and taxed under a tiered structure.

Note that communities typically considered “suburban” (e.g. Lower Sackville, Cole Harbour) are in the urban tax area. For these reasons, this report and the Rural AT Program may use the term “rural communities” to describe the suburban/rural tax areas.

The Charter does not provide direction for “level of services” interpretation. The rate difference between urban and rural areas is largely (if not entirely) attributed to sidewalk eligibility and maintenance (service standards are reflected in the assessment, not rate)⁹.

HRM’s approach to meeting high-need sidewalk gaps in **Urban HRM** is described in [Item No. 15.1.4 Halifax Regional Council Report from January 23, 2024- Level of Service HRM Streets, Sidewalks, and Curb Networks](#)¹⁰ with a goal to add about 55km of new sidewalk within Urban HRM over ten years.

⁷ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/home-property/property-taxes/residential-resource-tax-area-map-2023.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/property-taxes/tax-rates>

⁹ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230307rc102.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240123rc1514.pdf>

The Rural Recreation Strategy¹¹ was established with approaches that set out guiding principles for objectives and actions for the Municipality. An HRM-specific Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery (RLRSD) provides staff with a tool to use when considering context-sensitive and culturally relevant approaches to recreation service delivery in rural HRM and to prioritize the communities facing the greatest economic and travel barriers to participating in recreation.

Sidewalks in the rural communities were identified in the Rural Recreation Strategy as key assets in rural communities as they could provide free access to outdoor recreation opportunities. As expressed by rural residents, the most popular forms of recreation are walking, cycling on roadways in their communities and water activities at local lakes, rivers, and beaches. Consultation and analysis reveal several challenges associated with achieving access to outdoor recreation opportunities, including a lack of safe walking and cycling infrastructure. Addressing these challenges may discourage high risk recreational activities, such as using highway shoulders for walking and cycling, swimming without supervision, and use of unmarked trails.

In recent years, multiple requests and community-led planning projects from rural HRM (including Musquodoboit Harbour, Lucasville, Hubbards, Porters Lake and East Preston) recommended new sidewalks in the community centre (or mainstreet) to promote development, safety, health promotion, accessibility, and heritage recognition. These plans included the following:

- The Musquodoboit Harbour Community Development Plan (2017)¹² was commissioned by the Musquodoboit Harbour & Area Chamber of Commerce & Civic Affairs. A sidewalk was a key recommendation and the plan also focused on water and sewer services, streetscaping, and placemaking. This plan was presented to and supported by Regional Council in 2021. A staff report "...recommended that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to...explore funding options from other levels of government for the capital cost of sidewalk infrastructure"¹³.
- The Lucasville Greenway Society produced the Lucasville Greenway Vision in 2017. In 2017¹⁴, Regional Council approved the addition of Lucasville Road to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan. This was followed by the Lucasville Greenway Functional Plan (2021)¹⁵ which resulted in 30% designs for improving walking and biking infrastructure along Lucasville Road and connecting Lucasville to services within the community and surrounding area.
- The Hubbards Community Plan (2022)¹⁶ was commissioned by the Hubbards Streetscape Project Committee. The plan focuses on improving Hubbards through designing safer streets, streetscaping, and placemaking. The plan was presented to and supported by Regional Council in 2022¹⁷. A staff report "...recommended that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to...consider the proposed active transportation facilities in the Hubbards Community Plan when: (a) implementing the Rural Active Transportation Program, and (b) identifying potential projects in the multi-year Capital Plan..."¹⁸.
- The Porters Lake Business Association Infrastructure Improvement Plan (2022)¹⁹ was commissioned by the Porters Lake Business Association. The plan focuses on improving Porters Lake mainstreet, through placemaking, streetscaping, and improving transportation options. This plan was presented to Transportation Standing Committee in 2022²⁰.

¹¹ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240109rc1522.pdf>

¹² <https://www.mhacc.ca/community-development-plan/>

¹³ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/211123rc1517.pdf>

¹⁴ [Addition of Candidate Routes to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan - Jun 20/17 Regional Council | Halifax.ca](#)

¹⁵ [Lucasville Active Transportation Planning | Shape Your City Halifax](#)

¹⁶ onehubbards.org/sites/default/files/210103-HubbardsCommunityPlan-FINAL.pdf

¹⁷ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220614rci01.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240806rc1531.pdf>

¹⁹ [Projects — Porters Lake Business Association](#)

²⁰ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/221003tscmins.pdf>

As a result, the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and the Integrated Mobility Plan recommended developing an approach for HRM to build and maintain sidewalks in rural communities.

2. Active Transportation Infrastructure in Rural HRM prior to 2022

Until the approval of the Rural AT Program, the primary means of implementing AT infrastructure in rural communities in the past 30 years has been through HRM grant contributions (usually as a proportion of total costs) for volunteer trail associations building and maintaining off-road multi-use pathway corridors between communities. Approximately 90 kilometers were built with almost \$5 million in HRM funding. This work continues and about \$500,000 per year is granted from the HRM capital budget to volunteer community groups operating in rural HRM.

Sheet Harbour is the only rural community who has received a mainstreet sidewalk since 2010. The project was constructed in 2010 by a local Development Corporation that received funding from all orders of government (used for capital costs)²¹. Currently, there is a uniform charge (\$5-\$25 per property, depending on proximity to the sidewalk) paid by property owners in about 33 communities in and around Sheet Harbour that contributes to repaying capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs²². As per the agreement with the municipality, ongoing responsibility for the asset rested with the Development Corporation. This responsibility proved challenging for a community-based organization as outlined in a Regional Council Report dated August 20, 2024²³. In this report, Regional Council approved a funds transfer to the Chamber of Commerce. However, the Chamber of Commerce returned the funds to HRM. Given this experience HRM has concerns with transferring responsibility for municipal sidewalk assets to third parties.

Ad hoc segments of sidewalk have also been built in rural HRM, for example in conjunction with the Bay View High School in Upper Tantallon (700m along Hwy 213), at the entrance in Hubbards (about 150m on Trunk 3) and some Metro X park-and-rides. There are no charges (or area rate) applied by HRM for this project to residents in the respective areas.

3. Rural Active Transportation Program, 2022 - present

The Rural AT Program was approved by Regional Council on [February 8, 2022](#)²⁴ to meet recommendations from the AT Priorities Plans and IMP and has three components:

- 1) sidewalks or multi-use pathways in rural community centres;
- 2) development of walking and bicycling spines between rural communities (to be implemented on an ad hoc basis); and,
- 3) continued support for community-led off-road multi-use pathway construction, operation, and maintenance in rural areas through HRM's Active Transportation Grant Program.

The first element in this program, sidewalks, is the focus of this report and was identified as the priority under the Program. The target was to construct sidewalks in five rural community' centres within ten years.

While this report and the Rural AT Program primarily use the term "sidewalks" to describe the infrastructure considered in component one, it also includes on-road multi-use pathways. As a technical term, an on-road multi-use pathway is a type of sidewalk that is about 3 meters wide and allows for pedestrian, cyclist and e-scooter use. The decision on what to build in each community would depend on further planning.

To make rural communities eligible for sidewalks, in early 2023 Council approved a process and an area rate. [Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, the Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order](#)²⁵ establishes an

²¹ [Sheet Harbour Streetscape Area Rate: Proposed Assignment of Area Rate Agreement - Aug 20/24 Regional Council | Halifax.ca](#)

²² [Area Rate for Sheet Harbour Streetscape Program - Apr 10/18 Regional Council | Halifax.ca](#)

²³ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240820rc1513.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220208rc1554.pdf>

²⁵ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2022-008-adm.pdf>

area rate in accordance with *“the difference between the urban and rural residential general tax rates”*. Characteristics of the area rate include:

- implemented following approval by Regional Council pending community support;
- applied in perpetuity to properties in the fiscal year following substantial completion of the initial sidewalk;
- applied to all residential and resource properties within the area rate boundary approved, and all commercial properties within the area rate boundary paying the rural general tax rate;
- communities paying the area rate are eligible for additional sidewalks in perpetuity;
- would not increase as additional sidewalks are constructed; and,
- collected funds can only be used for communities who are paying the area rate.

The annual revenue from a \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value area rate ranges between the 17 communities, but falls into roughly five groupings:

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) \$12,000 - \$50,000 in seven communities; | c) \$100,000- \$200,000 in four communities; |
| b) \$50,000-\$100,000 in five communities; | d) over \$600,000 in one of the communities. |

There is almost no scenario, including the approved area rate of \$0.033 per \$100, where revenue would cover the capital costs of construction (e.g., East Preston multi-use pathway of 1.3KM was constructed in 2024 at about \$3.5 million). Therefore, the cost of construction would have to be funded from all HRM General Tax revenue and any cost sharing that could be secured from other orders of government.

While HRM doesn't currently maintain rural sidewalks, staff have considered a high estimate of \$20,000/year per km for the purposes of this report. A more accurate estimate would be determined by the market once these services (snow clearance, summer maintenance, surface repairs, lighting etc.) are procured.

Based on Regional Council direction and AO 2022-008-ADM, the implementation approach for making rural communities eligible for sidewalks and then planning and building them includes:

- prioritize five of the 17 candidate rural communities using the Regional Council approved criteria;
- conduct community engagement on the area rate and area rate boundary in the priority communities to understand their perspectives on the rate;
- report to Regional Council on the results of this engagement and seek direction on implementation;
- initiate functional planning in the approved candidate rural communities to include studies of existing conditions, community engagement to discuss facility location and type, and developing a recommended sidewalk plan;
- secure funding through the HRM's Capital Budget planning and through applications for cost-sharing with other orders of government;
- progress the priority projects through the typical planning, design, and construction phases;
- apply the area rate to a community after its sidewalk is constructed and transition to regular maintenance; and,
- initiate work in the remaining candidate rural communities after approved priority candidate rural communities have had planning initiated, or as directed by Council.

This report addresses the first three bullets in the implementation approach.

One rural community has already been approved for an area rate of \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value to enable eligibility for a multi-use pathway. East Preston went through the engagement and Council approval process in 2023²⁶. East Preston was supportive of the area rate and was advanced to meet an infrastructure funding deadline. The East Preston Greenway was constructed in 2024. Should Regional Council approve a new area rate for the AO 2022-008-ADM, staff would return to Council to recommend bringing East Preston into alignment.

²⁶ [Implementation of Area Rate to Fund Sidewalks Outside of the Urban Tax Area in East Preston - July 11/23 Regional Council | Halifax.ca](#)

DISCUSSION

This section includes information on:

1. the approach to prioritize five of the seventeen candidate rural communities to receive sidewalks and establish their preliminary area rate boundaries;
2. what we heard from engagement in the five priority communities; and
3. rationale for each of the report's recommendations.

1. Approach used to prioritize candidate rural communities and establish their preliminary area rate boundaries

1.1 Prioritization of five communities to be engaged for area rate

Halifax Regional Council approved adding seventeen candidate rural communities to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan as listed and outlined below (see *Figure 1- Halifax Regional Council Approved Map of Candidate Rural Communities and Spines added to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan*).

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cow Bay | 10. Middle Musquodoboit |
| 2. Dutch Settlement | 11. Musquodoboit Harbour |
| 3. East Preston | 12. Porters Lake |
| 4. Hatchet Lake/Brookside | 13. Sambro |
| 5. Hammonds Plains | 14. Sheet Harbour |
| 6. Hubbards | 15. Upper Tantallon |
| 7. Hubley | 16. Wellington |
| 8. Lake Echo | 17. Windsor Junction |
| 9. Lucasville | |

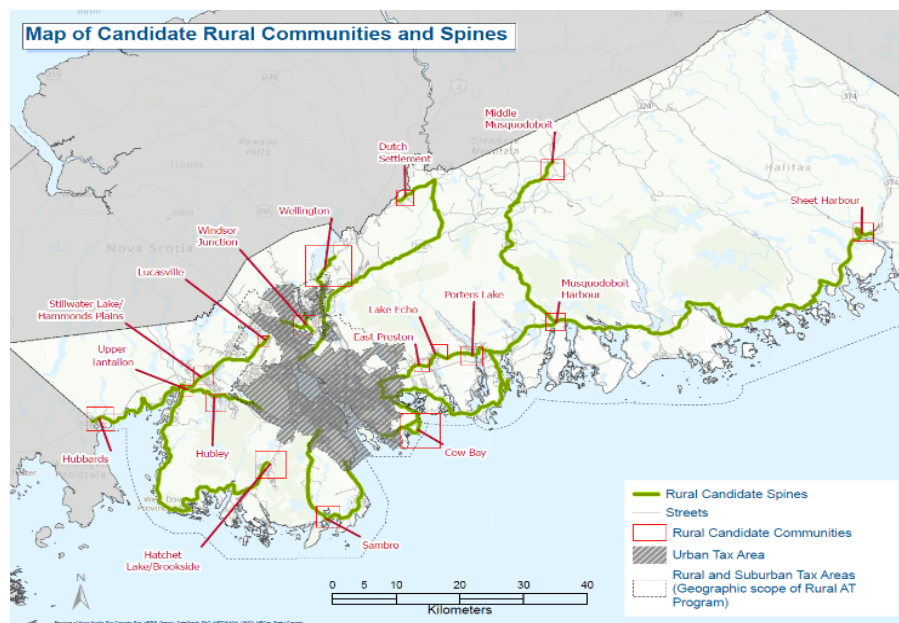


Figure 1: Halifax Regional Council Approved Map of Candidate Rural Communities and Spines added to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan

The evaluation criteria approved by Regional Council and used to identify priority communities includes being a rural growth centre in the HRM's Regional Plan, population density, safety, equity, municipal plans, community planning and advocacy, and number of local or regional destinations. More information on the evaluation tool and evaluation results are outlined in *Attachment 1 – Prioritization of Candidate Rural Communities*. The five prioritized communities, listed in the order they are discussed in this report, are:

- Porters Lake (rural tax area)
- Upper Tantallon (rural tax area)
- Musquodoboit Harbour (rural tax area)
- Lucasville (suburban tax area)
- Hubbards (rural tax area)

1.2 Establishing preliminary area rate boundaries for engagement

As per AO 2022-008-ADM, the area rate boundary must be at a minimum, the community boundary of the candidate rural community receiving the sidewalk and could extend into neighboring rural communities if data (travel patterns, school catchment boundaries, concentration and use of destinations, and engagement feedback) indicated their transportation habits generate the need for separated and protected active transportation infrastructure.

Travel patterns were analyzed using data (2019) available from HRM's subscription to the "Streetlight Insight Platform". Heat mapping was used to illustrate the average number of daily trips originating from neighbouring areas outside of the prioritized community boundary. This data illustrates frequent trips to each of the prioritized community's main street and informs which neighboring communities may be generating the need for safe and separated sidewalks.

School catchment boundaries for Halifax Regional Centre for Education English Program schools, located within the prioritized candidate rural communities, were used to illustrate which neighbouring communities may benefit from sidewalks in that community.

Concentration and use of community amenities were analysed through site visits, google maps, and engagement feedback to determine whether destinations in the community centres are regional and serve a larger area, or local and serve a smaller area.

The data outlined above was used to inform whether (and by how much) to expand the preliminary area rate boundaries for engagement feedback beyond the candidate rural community's boundary and into neighbouring communities.

Property owners and residents from each preliminary area rate boundary were notified by addressed mail and invited to participate and provide feedback in all engagement opportunities (see *Attachment 2 - What We Heard Report*).

2. Results of community engagement in five priority communities

In winter and early spring of 2024, HRM conducted stakeholder and public engagement in the five prioritized candidate rural communities as per requirements outlined in AO 2022-008-ADM. The three main components or questions considered during this engagement were the level of community support for:

- implementation of sidewalks in their community centre;
- the area rate proposed in the AO 2022-008-ADM; and
- the preliminary area rate boundary.

The *Community Engagement* section in this report and *Attachment 2 - What We Heard Report* details the notification and engagement methodology, and participation results, scope of engagement, and qualitative and quantitative results overall and in each of the five prioritized candidate rural communities.

General conclusions from the engagement include:

- Participation rate relative to number of mailout notifications delivered of at least 20% in the engagement indicates a good representation of the population in the community area boundary identified for each priority community;
- Porters Lake and Upper Tantallon respondents mostly do not support sidewalks.
- In Lucasville and Musquodoboit Harbour respondents support for sidewalks is at about 50/50.
- There is strong support for sidewalks in Hubbards and the respondents in the community of Hubbards (not including its adjacent communities) were supportive of the area rate.
- Porters Lake, Upper Tantallon, Lucasville and Musquodoboit Harbour respondents do not support the area rate.
- In each community, at least 50% of all survey participants who responded that they do not support sidewalks being added mentioned 'tax' or 'rate' among reasons. It shows that the area rate was significant enough to be included when not supporting the sidewalk.
- Engagement participants feel that it is the responsibility of the municipality to provide the necessary infrastructure within the current level of service, with no area rate added to an already high and not affordable property bill as they have the basic right to be safe when choosing active transportation to access destinations in their community.
- Engagement participants do not consider sidewalks as the only difference between the urban and suburban/rural level of services. There are a variety of strong perspectives on the municipal level and quality of services HRM's rural communities receive relative to more urban HRM communities and other rural Nova Scotian communities and the tax rates paid.
- Engagement participants feel that too much of their property taxes are funding projects in other communities and would like to see a fairer distribution of funds to the services they need and use.
- Engagement participants suggest they are more likely to support an area rate that:
 - is only applied for projects in their community;
 - is directly related to maintenance of the infrastructure;
 - recognizes that lower investments and maintenance costs are generated by a smaller quantity of sidewalks needed in rural areas versus urban; and/or
 - includes cost sharing with other levels of government as a funding mechanism for the capital costs with HRM's contribution from the general tax rate.
- Support for preliminary area rate boundaries, sidewalks, and area rates decreases the further a neighboring community is from the centre/main street of the prioritized community.

2.1 Porters Lake engagement results

Porters Lake and 14 surrounding area communities (see *Figure 2 - Porters Lake Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback*) were surveyed to determine support for sidewalks on Trunk 7 in their community centre, the area rate and community area boundary.

Participation in the engagement indicates a good representation of the population in the community area boundary identified for Porters Lake (see *Attachment 2- What We Heard Report* for details).

Porters Lake Preliminary Area Boundary	Population (18+)	Registered Properties	Meeting Attendees	Survey Responses
	8153	6870	319 ²⁷	1777 ²⁸

Table 1- Representation from Porters Lake

Participation rate relative to number of mailout notifications delivered was 35%.

²⁷ 22 meeting attendees did not list any community from Porters Lake Area Boundary; they were counted as they could be owning property in the area

²⁸ 174 survey responses did not mention a community they live in or mentioned a community not included in the area boundary; they were included as they could be owning property in the area

Results show strong opposition towards all engagement questions. From all 1,777 responses to the survey:

- 83% do not support sidewalks being added to Trunk 7 in Porters Lake;
- 94% do not support the area rate; and,
- 86% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary.

Based on feedback from the survey, public meetings, emails, and phone calls, some issues stood out as specific to this community:

- Sidewalks are not their priority. Priorities mentioned: recreation services, crosswalks, and fire services.
- Trunk 7 is not a priority for active transportation infrastructure.
- Participants do not feel that there has been enough engagement with the greater community or participation in prior community planning projects.
- Participants feel their taxes are not being distributed fairly by HRM and do not return to their community for investment.
- “Taxes” and “rate” are mentioned by 59% of those opposing to sidewalks on Trunk 7 among reasons to not support sidewalks in all communities.

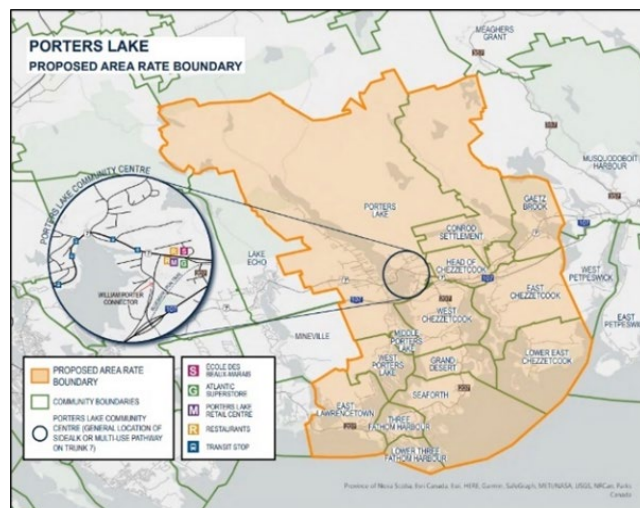


Figure 2 - Porters Lake Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback

After engagement with the community, staff have determined that majority of respondents from Porters Lake and all communities within the preliminary area rate boundary are strongly opposed to all components of the project, with strong opposition to sidewalks, the area rate, and the preliminary area rate boundary. Work to add a marked crosswalk on Trunk 7 in central Porters Lake is ongoing.

2.2 Upper Tantallon engagement results

Upper Tantallon and five surrounding area communities' respondents (see *Figure 3 - Upper Tantallon Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback*) were surveyed to indicate support for sidewalks in their two commercial and service hubs (on Trunk 3 and on Trunk 213), the area rate, and preliminary community area rate boundary.

Participation in the engagement indicates a good representation of the population in the community area boundary identified for Upper Tantallon (see *Attachment 2- What We Heard Report* for details).

Upper Tantallon Preliminary Area Boundary	Population (18+ only)	Registered Properties	Meeting Attendees	Survey Responses
	7445	4444	154 ²⁹	775 ³⁰

Table 2- Representation from Upper Tantallon

Participation rate relative to the number of mailout delivered was 21%.

²⁹ Nine meeting attendees did not list any community from Porters Lake Area Boundary; they were counted as they could be owning property in the area

³⁰ One survey response did not mention a community they live in or mentioned a community not included in the area boundary; they were included as they could be owning property in the area

Results show opposition toward most components of the project. From all 775 responses to the survey:

- 70% do not support sidewalks being added to Upper Tantallon;
- 78% do not support the area rate; and,
- 63% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary proposed.

Based on feedback from the survey, public meetings, emails, and phone calls, some issues stood out as specific to this community:

- Survey results show notable differences within the community of Tantallon and neighbouring communities (some were more supportive of sidewalks and the area rate).
- Upper Tantallon was directly impacted by the recent forest fires and for many the priority is constructing alternative egress corridors rather than sidewalks.
- Participants do not feel that there has been enough engagement with the greater community or participation in prior community planning efforts.
- “Taxes” and “rate” are mentioned by 51% of those opposing to sidewalks on Trunk 3 and Trunk 213 among reasons to not support sidewalks in all communities.

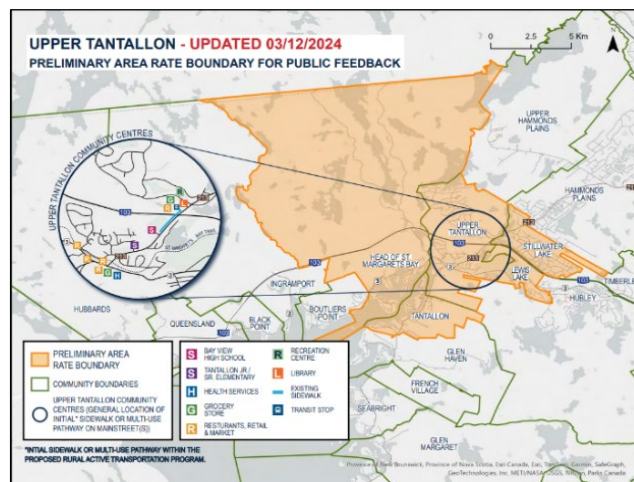


Figure 3 - Upper Tantallon Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback

After consultation with the community, staff have determined that respondents from Upper Tantallon, Stillwater Lake, and Lewis Lake are strongly opposed to most components of the project, with strong opposition to sidewalks, the area rate, and some opposition to the preliminary area rate boundary. Respondents from Tantallon and Head of St. Margarets Bay are more supportive of some components of the project; moderate support, and moderate opposition for sidewalks, strong opposition (but less than respondents in Upper Tantallon) to area rate, and some opposition to the preliminary area rate boundary.

2.3 Musquodoboit Harbour engagement results

Musquodoboit Harbour and nine surrounding area communities (see *Figure 4 - Musquodoboit Harbour Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback*) were surveyed to determine support for building a sidewalk in the community's centre on Trunk 7.

Participation in the engagement indicates a good representation of the population in the community area boundary identified for Musquodoboit Harbour (see *Attachment 2- What We Heard Report for details*).

Musquodoboit Harbour Preliminary Area Boundary	Population (18+ only)	Registered Properties	Meeting Attendees	Survey Responses
	3468	3172	159 ³¹	622 ³²

Table 3- Representation from Musquodoboit Harbour

Participation rate relative to the number of mailout delivered was 26%.

³¹ 10 meeting attendees did not list any community from Porters Lake Area Boundary; they were counted as they could be owning property in the area

³² 75 survey responses did not mention a community they live in or mentioned a community not included in the area boundary; they were included as they could be owning property in the area

Results show neither strong opposition nor strong support towards most components of the project, except for the area rate, which was strongly opposed. From all 622 responses to the survey:

- 57% do not support and 41% support sidewalks being added to Trunk 7 in Musquodoboit Harbour;
- 78% do not support the area rate; and,
- 64% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary proposed.

Based on feedback from the survey, public meetings, emails, and phone calls, some issues stood out as specific to this community:

- Musquodoboit Harbour has been discussing sidewalks for at least 30 years.
- The community is interested in approximately 2 kilometers on Trunk 7 (Musquodoboit Harbour Bridge to the bridge located between Little River Drive and Cobblestone Lane) for now.
- Participants perceived need for sidewalks is impacted by Eastern Shore District High School being relocated to East Chezzetcook and the uncertainty of how the building will be repurposed.
- Participants would prefer a funding mechanism similar to the Sheet Harbour Model (community driven, uniform charge, lower/tiered rate based on distance from sidewalk) or one directly related to the maintenance costs.
- “Taxes” and “rate” are mentioned by 68% of those opposing to sidewalks on Trunk 7 among reasons to not support sidewalks in all communities.

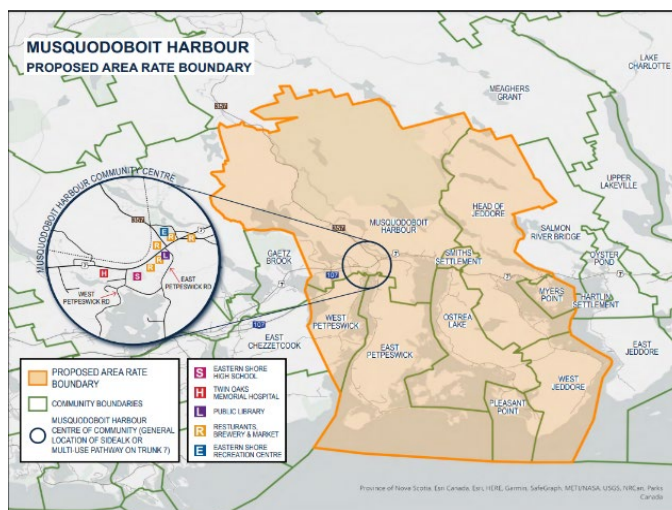


Figure 4 - Musquodoboit Harbour Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback

After consultation with the community, staff have determined that respondents from Musquodoboit Harbour and most communities immediately adjacent and with direct access to the centre's mainstreet are moderately supportive and opposed to some components of the project, with moderate support and moderate opposition for sidewalks, strong opposition to the area rate, and moderate support and moderate opposition to the preliminary area rate boundary.

2.4 Lucasville engagement results

Lucasville, a part of Hammonds Plains, and small sections of Middle and Lower Sackville (see *Figure 5 - Lucasville Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback*) were surveyed to determine support for the multi-use pathway along Lucasville Rd, the area rate and preliminary community area boundary. Participation in the engagement indicates a good representation of the population in the community area boundary identified for Lucasville (see *Attachment 2- What We Heard Report* for details).

Lucasville Preliminary Area Boundary	Population (18+ only)	Registered Properties	Meeting Attendees	Survey Responses
	2145	1411	83 ³³	258

Table 4- Representation from Lucasville

Participation rate relative to the number of mailout delivered was 24%.

³³ 1 meeting attendee did not list any community from Porters Lake Area Boundary; they were counted as they could be owning property in the area

Results showed neither strong opposition nor strong support towards most components of the project. From 258 responses to the survey:

- 49% do not support and 49% do support a multi-use pathway being added to Lucasville Road in Lucasville;
- 60% do not support the area rate; and,
- 52% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary proposed.

Based on feedback from the survey, public meetings, emails, and phone calls, some issues stood out as specific to this community:

- Lucasville lacks access to transit and facilities to walk and cycle safely to the destinations in the community; the closest transit service is just outside the community.
- Lucasville is rapidly changing due to significant growth and development in the community. Community sees a role for developers to be investing in community and infrastructure.
- “Taxes” and “rate” are mentioned by 61% of those opposing to sidewalks on Lucasville Rd among reasons to not support sidewalks in all communities.
- Participants outlined service inequities experienced by this African Nova Scotian community including the historical lack of investment in public transportation service and requested that no area rate be charged to implement the sidewalk project in their community.

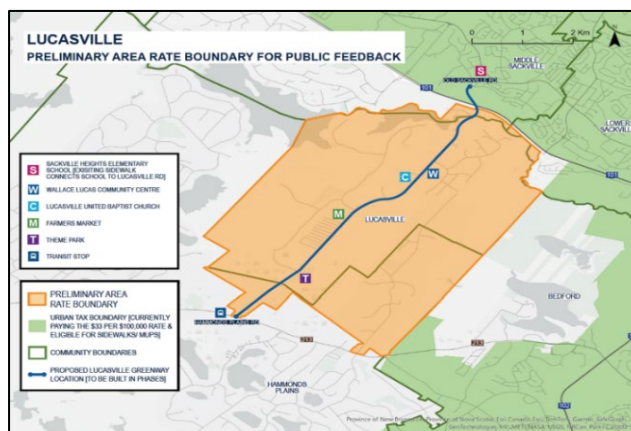


Figure 5 - Lucasville Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Feedback

After consultation with the community, staff have determined that respondents from Lucasville are moderately supportive and opposed to all components of the project, with moderate support and moderate opposition for sidewalks, the area rate, and the preliminary area rate boundary. Participants outside Lucasville but within the preliminary area rate boundary (Hammonds Plains, Middle Sackville, Lower Sackville) are strongly opposed to all components of the project: strong opposition to sidewalks, the area rate, and the preliminary area rate boundary. Adding a marked crosswalk in Lucasville is being considered, however, it would ideally be installed with the Greenway.

2.4.1. Request from Lucasville Community Associations for exemption from area rate in recognition of historic service inequities

The Lucasville Greenway Society (LGS) has been working towards the planning and construction of an on-road multi-use pathway to link this historic African Nova Scotian community to destinations in Lower Sackville along Lucasville Rd since 2017. HRM has supported functional planning of this facility to ensure viability and understand costs. The LGS would like a segment of the multi-use pathway built before the community's bicentennial in 2027.

The Lucasville Greenway Society along with other Lucasville community led organizations requested an exemption to the area rate. Their position is that this historically African Nova Scotian (ANS) community has been *overlooked, underserved, been an afterthought or not thought about at all* in municipal planning for community enhancements. They believe that exempting them would be an *acknowledgement of past and current inequities in service, planning and actions in HRM ANS communities. HRM would then be in a position to take the lead on the road to reconciliation and doing the right thing in terms of governance*

The community led organizations suggested that Lucasville and the Lucasville Greenway Project could be a model for the case of an "area rate exemption" like how the *Beechville Community Action Plan* is a model for the Action Plan development in African Nova Scotian communities.

This request was considered by various HRM groups working in African Nova Scotian communities. While there is agreement that new approaches are required in these communities, there was concern with singling out only one community for such an exemption. The preferred approach is to use Community Action

Planning to address past approaches to planning for African Nova Scotian communities. On September 10, 2024, [Regional Council directed staff to begin the Community Action Planning process](#) with the Lucasville community through Planning & Development's African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning Program (ANSCAP), in support of the [African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan](#), and called for by Regional Plan Policies EC-24 to EC-26. It is envisioned that the Community Action Planning process will allow community priorities to be identified and brought forward to Council for action.

Planning & Development staff and the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) have begun this process with the Lucasville community, and discussions are ongoing. A lack of active transportation infrastructure has been consistently identified in early discussions through this process as a community priority. One of the goals is "to implement Regional Council's endorsement of the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan (REPP) through ANSCAP Communities by working to ensure HRM efforts are deemed as practical forms of reparation for Community (Action 6)³⁴."

2.5 Hubbards engagement results

Hubbards, Black Point and Queensland (see *Figure 6 - Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Community Engagement*) were surveyed to determine support for sidewalks on Trunk 3, area rate and preliminary area rate boundary.

Participation in the engagement indicates a good representation of the population in the community area boundary identified for Hubbards (see *Attachment 2- What We Heard* Report for details).

Hubbards Preliminary Area Boundary	Population (18+)	Registered Properties	Meeting Attendees	Survey Responses
	1147	1418	134 ³⁵	272 ³⁶

Table 5- Representation from Hubbards

Participation rate relative to the number of mailout delivered was 26%.

Results show neither strong opposition nor strong support towards the components of the project.

From all 272 responses to the survey:

- 65% support sidewalks being added to Trunk 3 in Hubbards;
- 48% do not support and 48% support the area rate; and,
- 47% do not support and 44% support the preliminary area rate boundary proposed.

Support from Hubbards (excluding Black Point and Queensland) for sidewalks is 81%, for the area rate is 65%, and for the preliminary area rate boundary is 62%.

³⁴ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240910rc15114.pdf> - Attachment A

³⁵ 14 meeting attendees did not list any community from Porters Lake Area Boundary; they were counted as they could be owning property in the area

³⁶ 2 survey responses did not mention a community they live in or mentioned a community not included in the area boundary; they were included as they could be owning property in the area

Based on feedback from the survey, public meetings, emails, and phone calls, some issues stood out as specific to this community:

- Participants do not feel that the area rate is fair but are willing to pay it for the sake of community safety.
- Participants noted that the Hubbards area located in Chester Municipality do not pay an area rate for sidewalks and overall, pay less in property taxes.
- Participants from Queensland and Black Point feel that Hubbards is a good location for a sidewalk, but that they would not benefit from it and therefore should not have to pay for it. Participants from these communities may be willing to pay an area rate for sidewalks in their own communities.
- Participants would prefer a funding mechanism similar to the Sheet Harbour Model (community driven, uniform charge, lower/ tiered rate based on distance from sidewalk) or one directly related to the maintenance costs.
- “Taxes” and “rate” are mentioned by 57% of those opposing to sidewalks on Trunk 3 among reasons to not support sidewalks in all communities.

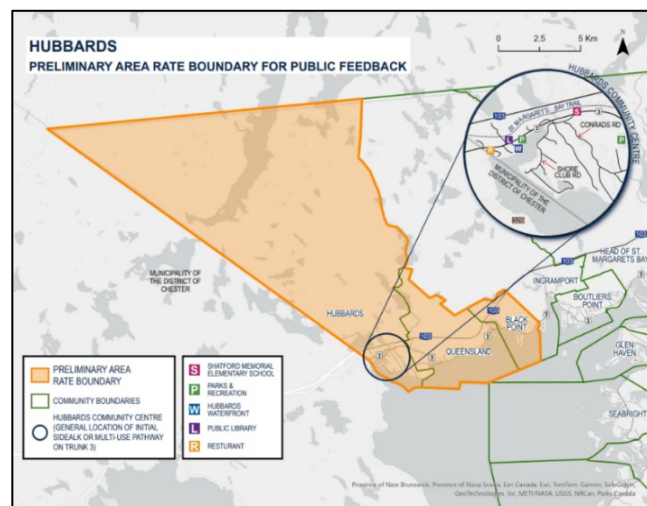


Figure 6 - Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Public Engagement

After consultation with the community, staff have determined that respondents from Hubbards are more supportive of all components of the project, especially compared to the other prioritized communities; Queensland and Black Point are less supportive of all components.

Given this interest and level of support, an area rate that is only paid by residents of Hubbards appears viable. While there could be a recommendation to proceed with the area rate under the current A.O., staff propose coming back to Council to either recommend the rate of \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value or a new rate as outlined in the Section 3.1. of this report. In the meantime, 30% design and additional community planning should proceed in order to advance the project.

3. Recommendations and rationale for next steps based on engagement results

3.1. Direct staff to prepare amendments to Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, the *Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order* to implement a fixed area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value for sidewalks in rural communities and come back to Council for approval.

As outlined in the *Background* section, Halifax Charter requires Council to set separate commercial and residential tax rates for the three level of services areas. The only general rate difference (\$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value) associated with level of services difference is between urban and suburban/rural communities. HRM's fiscal practice defines that the difference in levels of services is eligibility for construction and maintenance of sidewalks.

As summarized in *Section 2 - Results of community engagement in five priority communities*, rural communities engaged provided strong and broad feedback to oppose HRM's position that the eligibility for sidewalks is the main difference in services between urban and suburban/rural tax areas. They also opposed to the area rate rationale to be the difference between the urban and the suburban/rural general tax rates. “Taxes” and “rate” was one of the main reasons listed by more than 50% of respondents from each community survey who did not support the sidewalks. A reduced area rate based on a different rationale could result in an increase of support for sidewalks in these communities.

Staff considered alternative options that still acknowledge sidewalks as an addition to the level of service for rural communities but are more aligned with community feedback and the rural lens concept related to equitable access to municipal services³⁷ (see *Attachment 3- Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations* for details).

The financial implications to the municipality are not significantly different between the options and the current approved area rate of \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value (see *Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options* for details), as they all bring relatively low revenue. Under all options, if building sidewalks in rural communities requires an increase in capital budget to cover construction costs, the general tax rate would likely have to be increased.

Option 1: Fixed Area Rate

This approach is based on establishing a rate that would not change when new communities are added, property values and/ or the number of sidewalks change. It is based on approximate maintenance costs and would set a rate lower than the existing proposed rate. This approach aligns with the current policy that suburban/rural communities need to pay an area rate to be eligible for sidewalks. All rural communities receiving a sidewalk under the Rural AT Program would pay the same rate.

There are various ways to rationalize and calculate this rate. *Attachment 3- Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations* includes three scenarios where the rate is calculated using:

- (1) Area rate of \$0.021 to cover the total estimated maintenance costs and total revenue from all taxable properties in East Preston, Hubbards, Lucasville, Musquodoboit Harbour, assuming the initial 6.4 km of sidewalks in all communities.
- (2) Area rate of \$0.018, the median area rate value³⁸ of the area rates from each candidate community that is needed to cover their own maintenance costs for the initial sidewalk.
- (3) Area rate of \$0.012 to cover the total estimated maintenance costs and total revenue from all taxable properties in all candidate communities.

The first scenario was chosen to calculate a rate as it is reasonably close to the estimated maintenance costs for communities that are willing to pay an area rate (East Preston and Hubbards) and those places with interest in new sidewalks or MUPs (Lucasville and Musquodoboit Harbour).

In *Figure 7- Area Rate Options Summary* below, these rates are used as examples for comparison with the Variable Maintenance Area Rate.

Option 2: Variable Area Rate

This approach would tie the sidewalk area rate directly to recovery of the annual maintenance costs of \$20,000 per kilometer per year³⁹. All rural communities receiving a sidewalk under the Rural AT Program would pay the same rate. The calculation uses the cumulative maintenance costs and cumulative taxable property value from all participating rural communities and changes when new communities are added. It would be capped at \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value to match the concept of difference between the urban tax rate and rural/ suburban tax rate.

This approach could make the rate more tangible to residents and, in most scenarios, it would be lower than the existing proposed rate (see *Table 6 - Summary of Area Rate Options*). One factor with this approach is that it would likely change as new sidewalks and/or new communities are added (see *Figure 7 - Area Rate Options Scenarios*).

This option is not recommended because of the downsides identified:

- Area Rate would need to change as new sidewalks are added and new communities join the program; this would contribute to a significant impact to Finance's processes

³⁷ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240109rc1522.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/240718cped1313.pdf>

³⁹ This is a high - estimate value. Actual costs will only be known after procuring maintenance services.

- Depending on the order in which new communities are being added, the area rate could fluctuate.
- Although variation is not expected yearly, residents being engaged on this new rate will only know the cap and potential direction of the rate.

Option 3: Uniform Charge tied to estimated maintenance costs but unrelated to property values

This is based on the Sheet Harbour uniform charge approach where a set amount is paid annually per property. Amount(s) would be determined based on proximity to sidewalks, rather than on property value. This approach aligns with the current approach that suburban/rural communities need to pay an area rate to be eligible for sidewalks. Unlike the Sheet Harbour model, it is not assumed that this uniform charge would be set to include recovery for capital costs, just maintenance costs to align with the other rates explored in this report.

This option is not recommended because of the downsides identified with this approach:

- Uniform charge amount(s) would need to change as new sidewalks are added and new communities join the program.
- The option does not account for inflation, as it is not tied to property value; as a result, the amount charge would either not cover maintenance costs for the program or would need to be adjusted to cover the costs.
- It is a regressive form of taxation where owners pay the same regardless of the value of their property; and
- There would be at minimum three different area rates (if there are three tiers used like Sheet Harbour) across rural communities contributing to a significant impact to Finance's processes.

A summary of considerations and implications related to the four area rate options is included in *Table 6- Summary of Area Rate Options*.

Considerations	AO 2022-008-ADM Area Rate	Option 1: Fixed Area Rate	Option 2: Variable Area Rate	Option 3: Uniform Charge
Different than area rate from AO 2022-008-ADM	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tied to the recovery of maintenance cost	No	Somewhat	Yes	Only if regularly adjusted
Predictable amount for property owner	Yes	Yes	Could change over time	Yes
Impacts to Finance processes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Impacts to Finance policy	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is it a "regressive" tax	No	No	No	Yes
Taxpayers in rural area boundaries in the program pay the same rate	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Table 6: Summary of Area Rate Options

Area Rate Options Illustrated

Figure 7 Area Rate Options Scenarios illustrates the consistency in the current area rate, the three fixed rate scenarios proposed and the fluctuation in the variable maintenance rate when new communities are added.

The goal of the Rural AT Program is to have sidewalks in five candidate rural communities in 10 years, however due to the 'opt in nature' of the area rate, there is no prescribed timeline or order of when additional communities will join the program and begin paying the area rate. Some candidate communities have not been prioritized; some prioritized communities (Upper Tantallon – including Stillwater Lake and Porters Lake) were strongly opposed and are recommended in this report to be deprioritized; the "opt-in nature" of the program will highly impact the order of new communities being added.

The calculations for East Preston (1.3 kilometers), Hubbards (1.5 kilometers), Lucasville (1.4 kilometers), and Musquodoboit Harbour (2.2 kilometers) are from existing community plans, functional plans, survey responses and/or engagement feedback. Estimated kilometers of sidewalk for the additional thirteen candidate communities is at 2 kilometers each, as specific estimates are not as readily available. Details on the rate calculations are in *Attachment 3- Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations*.

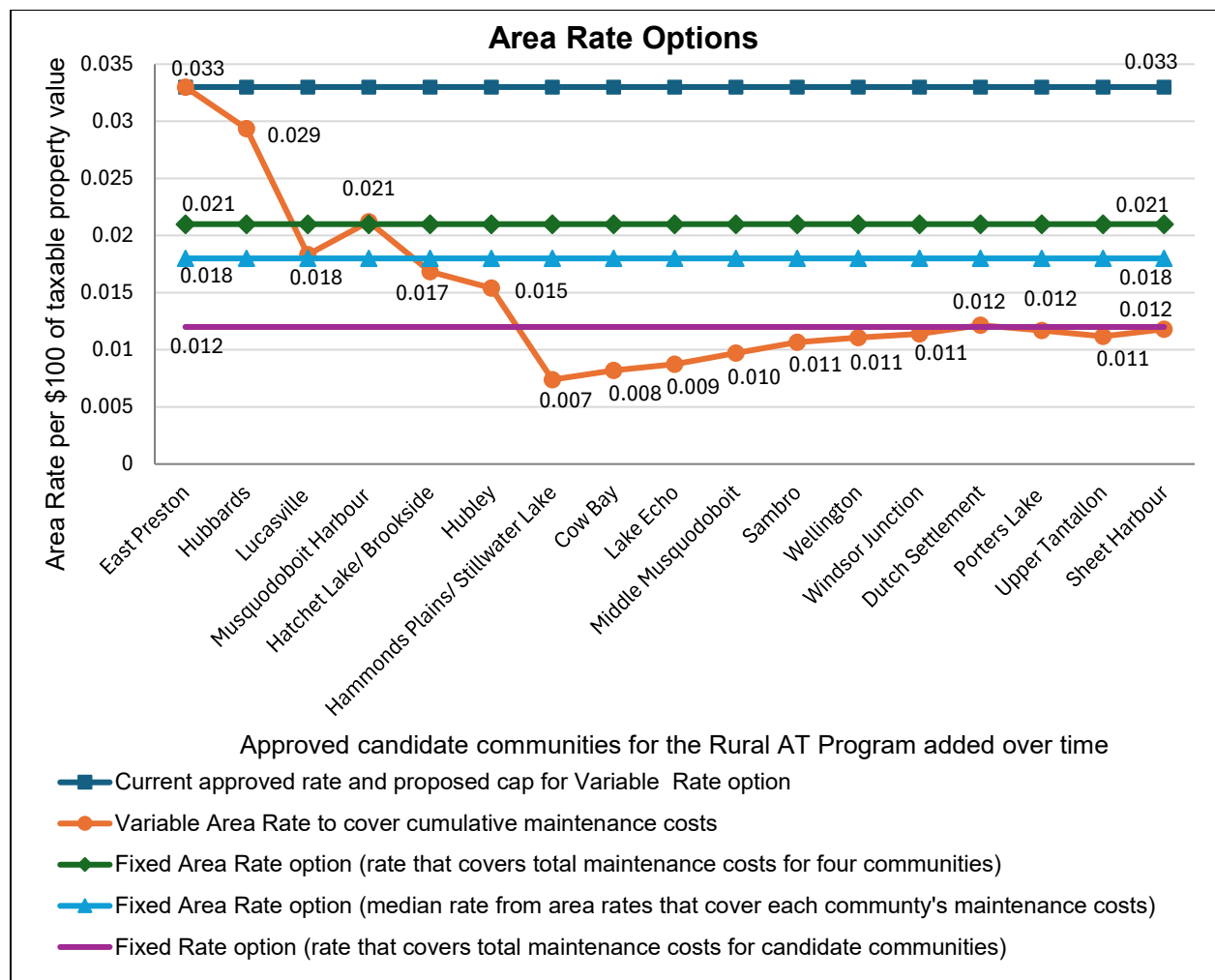


Figure 7 Area Rate Options

Assumptions for Variable Rate Option:

- Area rate fluctuates pending on the order of new communities added, that would affect the cumulated taxable property values from new communities and/ or the length of sidewalks added which would affect cumulative maintenance costs ;
- The order used to assess impact on area rate is for example purposes only;
- If communities reject even the lower rate, then the variable area rate would not change.

Recommended Option: Option 1 - Fixed Area Rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value tied to estimated total maintenance costs for four candidate communities

Staff recommends the area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value for the Regional Council's consideration as the new area rate to implement sidewalks in rural communities under the Rural Active

Transportation Program. This rate calculation is based on recovering the \$128,000 maintenance costs needed for the estimated initial sidewalks for East Preston, Hubbards, Lucasville, and Musquodoboit Harbour.

Priority communities	Total taxable property value (2024)	Estimated kilometers of sidewalk	Annual maintenance costs (\$20,000 per km)	Rate calculated to cover maintenance costs per \$100
	\$603,382,000	6.4	\$128,000	\$ 0.021

Table 7 – Area Rate Calculation of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value

In comparison to the other options, this area rate creates no impact or risks to current legislation and fiscal policy and overall responds to requests received during public engagement:

- Interpretation of level of services between tax areas is maintained as it requires an additional tax for rural communities to be eligible for sidewalks.
- Responds to what we heard from rural residents criticizing the position that eligibility for sidewalks is the only difference in level of services between tax areas.
- Responds to what we heard from rural residents that any tax should be tied to a specific tangible cost, easy to understand and that is predictable, therefore more support could be received from rural communities such as Lucasville and Musquodoboit Harbour.
- A property owner with a property of \$100,000 taxable value would receive an added area rate on the property tax bill of \$21 per year instead of \$33, which could lessen their financial burden
- Area rate is sufficient to cover total maintenance costs for all seventeen communities and therefore no anticipated change is needed as new communities are being added.
- Area rate creates less impact with some communities contributing more than others to the program.
- The option is not impacted by inflation, as it is tied to property value, which increases every year at least by inflation rate; and
- Finance's processes will not be as significant beyond the initial setup when adding a new community to the program.

3.1 Pending approval of an amended AO 2022-008-ADM, conduct further public engagement in Musquodoboit Harbour and Lucasville to understand their position on a new approach to an area rate.

As outlined in this report, there is moderate support for sidewalks in Musquodoboit Harbour and Lucasville, however, these communities expressed more than 50% opposition to the area rate. Therefore, pending approval of the amended Administrative Order, staff is proposing further engagement in these communities to determine if there is more support for sidewalks using a lower area rate that is tied to maintenance rather than the currently approved rate as per AO 2022-008-ADM. Further engagement would also include reconsideration of the proposed preliminary area rate boundary as informed through engagement.

3.2 Begin functional planning for the priority segment of sidewalk in Hubbards. Return to North West Community Council to recommend Regional Council final approval of the area rate and an area rate boundary.

As outlined in this report, there is significant support for sidewalks and a willingness to pay the area rate in Hubbards (excluding Black Point and Queensland). These results should enable active transportation functional planning, which would advance the project to 30% design. The 30% design would build on the extensive community plans commissioned by the Hubbards Streetscape Project community group and previously presented to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee and to the Regional Council⁴⁰ in 2024. A good quality 30% design would be informed by topographical survey,

⁴⁰ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240806rc-mins.pdf>

property constraints, community feedback, key destinations and other factors. It would help position the project for construction.

Staff will return to Community Council to recommend that Regional Council approve the area rate and an area rate boundary in Hubbards. This would be either at the current approved rate or, if Council supports Recommendation One, after the area rate in AO 2022-008-ADM is changed to 0.021 per \$100 of assessed property value.

3.3 De-prioritize planning for sidewalks in Upper Tantallon and Porters Lake in response to the community engagement feedback.

As outlined in this report, there is moderate to strong opposition to sidewalks in Upper Tantallon and Porters Lake. Therefore, staff is proposing to not pursue sidewalks or related community engagement in Upper Tantallon and Porters Lake for at least five years.

Community visioning could be included as part of other HRM strategic planning initiatives, such as the Regional Planning Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Plan. If approached by community organizations, HRM could also support them in leading community visioning projects.

While the *Porters Lake Infrastructure Improvement Plan* recommended a sidewalk on Trunk 7, as noted above, there was little support from the public during the most recent engagement. For now, HRM's AT priorities in Porters Lake will be continued support for the recapitalization of the Blueberry Run Trail and planning for a connection between the Blueberry Run and Gaetz Brook Greenway. Both of these projects are funded through the general tax rate. There is also a process to add a marked crosswalk on Trunk 7 in Porters Lake. As well, the Province may choose to add paved shoulders to Trunk 7.

There have been no previous community-led plans that included sidewalks in Upper Tantallon. There are two potential community centres/mainstreet areas (Upper Tantallon/Hubley Centre (Hammonds Plains Road) and Tantallon Crossroads (Trunk 3) and potential for connecting these two areas. As a result, even those supporting sidewalks had different priorities for an initial sidewalk location. Additionally, the fire that impacted the Westwood Hills neighborhood in Upper Tantallon was a factor in the community having other priorities to focus on, such as safe alternative access points to main roads.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications related to the recommendations in this report are relatively modest. They include expenses and staff time for additional public engagement in Musquodoboit Harbour and Lucasville and for initiating functional planning and 30% design in Hubbards. These costs would be incurred from account CR200001.

However,, the financial implications of constructing and maintaining new sidewalks in rural HRM are significant. Given the high cost of new sidewalk infrastructure and the modest revenue that could be generated in each community with any of the options discussed, initial construction and the eventual re-capitalization costs would be borne from general tax revenue and funding that could be secured from other orders of government.

There is some consideration for planning and designing rural sidewalks in the recently approved 2025-26 HRM Budget Plan. Typical planning and design costs for approved rural sidewalks could be covered under account CR200001. However, most potential construction costs are not supported. A segment of the Lucasville Greenway is the only rural sidewalk project being considered for construction in the next four years (should an area rate be approved) as planning work is complete with a 30% design and there is cost-shared funding available for this project through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Due to limited budget, it would likely be the only active transportation capital project in the year it is constructed. Construction of other rural sidewalks would likely take place after 2028. This is due to the time required for planning and design and limited construction budget. These rural sidewalk projects would likely require an increase to the current annual budgets in the active transportation capital plan, and some form of cost-shared funding from other orders of government.

There will be a reduction in revenue if Council agrees with a lower area rate than the currently approved \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value. This reduction in revenue is calculated as “forgone revenue” which is the difference between revenue raised at currently approved area rate (\$0.033 per \$100) and revenue raised at the proposed area rate (\$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value).

The list below outlines a scenario for forgone revenue assuming the sidewalks are approved and constructed in the following order: East Preston, Hubbards, Lucasville, Musquodoboit Harbour.

- East Preston: \$8,696 in annual forgone revenue
- East Preston and Hubbards: \$22,879 in annual forgone revenue
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Lucasville: \$54,978 in annual forgone revenue
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Musquodoboit Harbour: \$72,406 in annual forgone revenue

The financial implications as a result of each Area Rate option proposed compared to the AO 2020-008-ADM Area Rate are outlined in *Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options*.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no legal risks associated with the recommended course of action. Potential risks related to AT facility design, construction, and operation, including on land owned by the Nova Scotia Province, are typical for HRM and systems are in place to help manage these risks.

Risks associated with HRM's ability to meet its commitments outlined in multiple strategic plans (AT Priorities Plan, IMP, Rural Recreation Strategic Plan, Strategic Road Safety Plan, Regional Plan- Growth Centres) are very highly dependent upon the Regional Council decision on the area rate due to the low support received from communities engaged for the area rate charge. A lower area rate could increase this support and allow HRM to create safe spaces for residents to walk, cycle, and recreate in rural communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement followed the procedures outlined in AO 2022-008-ADM and included various levels of interaction with both stakeholders (community organizations representative of each rural communities) and the public (property owners, residents, and individual and commercial service providers). *Attachment 2 - What We Heard Report* outlines stakeholders and public notification, engagement methodology, and engagement results, overall and in each community.

A summary of the community engagement approach and scope are outlined below in order of progress:

1. **Stakeholder engagement** in all five communities occurred between October 2023 and May 2024; activities included:
 - Sent information to community stakeholders that their community was shortlisted and is being assessed for implementation of an area rate to fund sidewalks in their community centre.
 - Arranged in-person and online meetings to discuss any previous community-led initiatives and perspectives/concerns relative to active transportation and their impact during community engagement.
 - Offered presentations to outline the three main components and consulted on the preliminary area rate boundary to be used for public notification and to be proposed during community engagement.
2. **Notifications** of public engagement to property owners and residents included in the preliminary area rate boundary started at least two weeks prior to in-person public engagement and included:
 - addressed notification letters (over 13,000 delivered);
 - location targeted Facebook advertisements and posts;
 - public service announcements on electronic boards;
 - regional Councillors' notifications in newsletters, correspondence, and posts in social media and local community groups/ Facebook groups; and,
 - some local print media (e.g. Eastern Shore Cooperator for Porters Lake and Musquodoboit Harbour).

- 3. Public engagement** occurred for approximately four weeks (some longer to accommodate for school breaks/holidays) in each of the five communities between mid-January 2024 to mid-May 2024.

The purpose of community engagement was for staff to:

- inform public that their community was shortlisted and being assessed for implementation of an area rate for sidewalks in their community centre;
- present relevant information/data related to the three main components;
- learn community perspectives and concerns relative to the project's three main components to include as evidence to support recommendations to Regional Council.

The methodology provided inclusive opportunities to access information and provide feedback, such as:

- in-person public meetings (880 attendees to public meetings in all five communities) with presentations and Q&A sessions with Staff, Councilors and community stakeholders (notes taken by HRM Project Manager) organized in well-known, accessible community buildings;
- project information posted on the Halifax.ca and Halifax Shape Your City engagement platform⁴¹ (over 10,000 visitors);
- online survey and paper survey option widely distributed at public meetings and through libraries, community centres, provincial and municipal representatives, local advocates, or by direct mail at recipient's request; response rate of at least 20% was recorded for surveys received from each community; and,
- designated staff email and phone to collect feedback promoted in all materials distributed to the public.

Staff received additional written submissions in response to community engagements:

- MLA Kent Smith submitted a letter in support of public opinion as per the MLA's observations from his attendance and participation in the public meetings for Porters Lake and Musquodoboit Harbour (see *Attachment 2 - What We Heard Report- Section 8*).
- The Municipal Clerks' Office received and presented in Regional Council on March 19, 2024, a petition signed by 650 property owners and residents in the Porters Lake area opposing the area rate for Porters Lake and surrounding communities.
- Lucasville Greenway Society sent written communication to staff outlining the service inequities in Lucasville, including the historical lack of investment in public transportation services and requested that no area rate be charged to implement the sidewalk project in their community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

This project is supportive of the Municipality's sustainability objectives by supporting a program which will allow HRM to consider the implementation of AT services in its rural communities, making it safer and more comfortable for residents to choose sustainable transportation options for everyday transportation purposes. Creating opportunities for residents to make this shift is intended reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help HRM meet the mode share targets outlined in the Regional Plan and the 2018 Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP)⁴².

Updating Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM to reflect community engagement could potentially remove the barriers to implement Sidewalks in Rural Community Centre in the seventeen candidate communities and reduce the risk of failing to increase rural community safety priorities identified in the 2024 Road Safety Strategy.⁴³

ALTERNATIVES

That Halifax Regional Council:

⁴¹ <https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/rural-active-transportation>

⁴² https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/IMP_report_171220-WEB.pdf

⁴³ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/streets-sidewalks/attachment-1-road-safety-strategy.pdf>

1. Maintain the existing Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM and make no updates to the area rate as the “difference between the urban and suburban/rural general tax rates (currently at \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value) and direct the CAO to direct staff to prepare a staff report to North West Community Council to recommend the approval of the area rate and an area rate boundary in Hubbards.
2. Direct the CAO to prepare amendments to Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM to establish a variable rate to recover total maintenance costs as new communities and /or sidewalks are added to the AT Rural Program.
3. Direct the CAO to prepare amendments to Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM to establish an area rate based on a uniform charge that is not tied to property values but rather distance from the centre/ mainstreet being considered.
4. Direct the CAO to direct staff to prepare a supplementary staff report exploring other options to make rural communities eligible for sidewalks.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c 39:

94 (1) The Council shall set separate commercial and residential tax rates for the area of the Municipality determined by the Council to be

- (a) a rural area receiving a rural level of services;
- (b) a suburban area receiving a suburban level of services; and
- (c) an urban area receiving an urban level of services.

96 (1) The Council may spend money in an area, or for the benefit of an area, for any purpose for which the Municipality may expend funds or borrow.

(2) The Council may recover annually from the area the amount required or as much of that sum as the Council considers advisable to collect in any one fiscal year by an area rate of so much on the dollar on the assessed value of the taxable property or occupancy assessments in the area.

(3) The Council may provide

- (a) a subsidy for an area rate from the general tax rate in the amount or proportion approved by the Council;
- (b) in the resolution setting the area rate, that the area rate applies only to the assessed value of one or more of the taxable commercial, residential or resource property and occupancy assessments in the area.

(4) The Council may, in lieu of levying an area rate, levy a uniform charge on each

- (a) taxable property assessment;
- (b) dwelling unit, in the area.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Prioritization of Candidate Rural Communities

Attachment 2 - What We Heard Report

Attachment 3 - Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations

Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options

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Attachment 1 - Prioritization of Candidate Rural Communities

Halifax Regional Council approved adding the seventeen candidate rural communities as outlined below in *Figure 1- Map of Candidate Rural Communities and Spines to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan*.

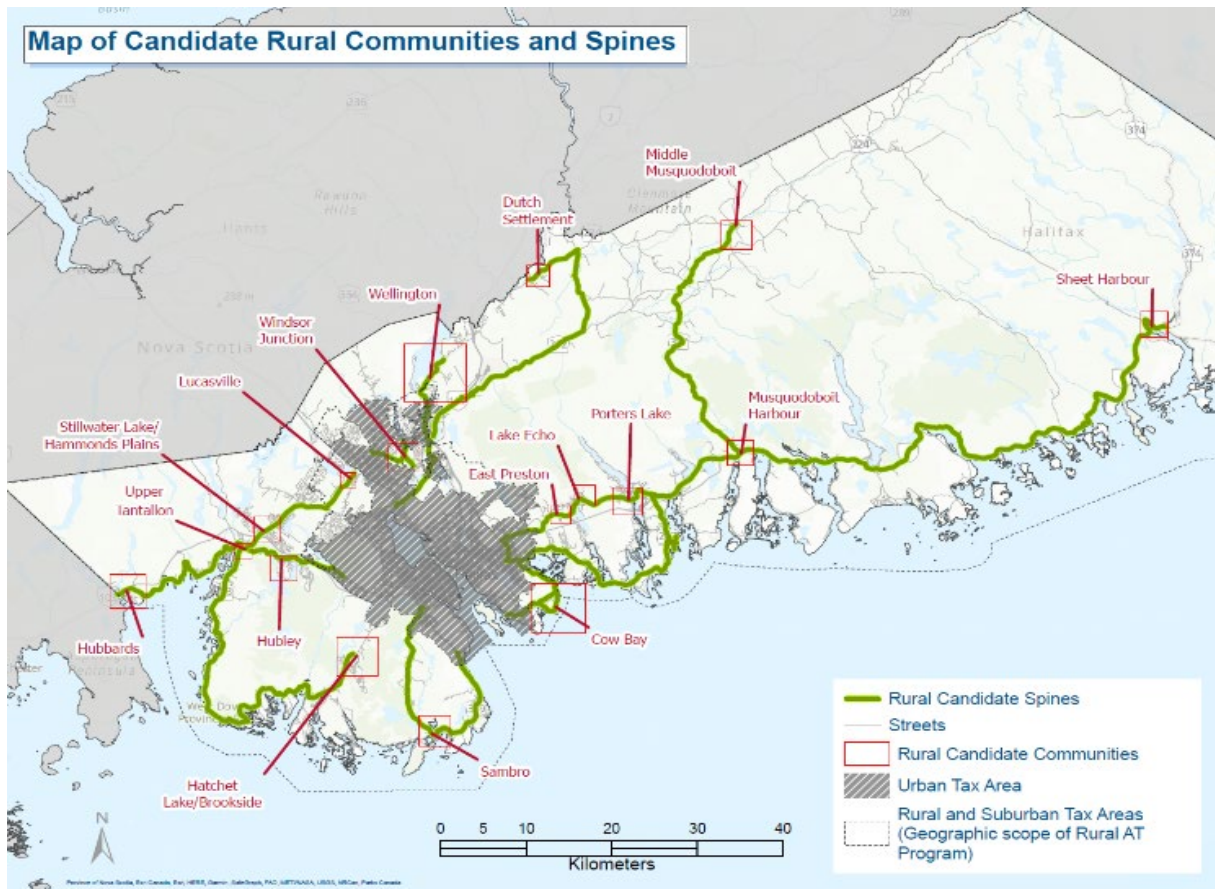


Figure 1: Halifax Regional Council approved map of candidate rural communities and spines.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cow Bay | 9. Lucasville |
| 2. Dutch Settlement | 10. Middle Musquodoboit |
| 3. East Preston | 11. Musquodoboit Harbour |
| 4. Hatchet Lake/Brookside | 12. Porters Lake |
| 5. Hammonds Plains/Stillwater Lake | 13. Sambro |
| 6. Hubbards | 14. Sheet Harbour |
| 7. Hubley | 15. Upper Tantallon |
| 8. Lake Echo | 16. Wellington |
| | 17. Windsor Junction |

1. Evaluation Framework

With sidewalks in candidate rural communities established as the program priority, a prioritization framework was used to determine which communities would receive investment first.

To prioritize five of the seventeen communities, a set of objectives were established by amalgamating direction from the Active Transportation Priorities Plan, Integrated Mobility Plan, [Regional Council approved](#)

[Prioritization Framework](#)¹, best practices research, criteria identified for evaluating sidewalk opportunities, and stakeholder insights. Through the process of applying this framework, the criterion was updated to align with available data for analysis, and lessons learned.

Table 1 - Updated Criteria Used to Evaluate and Prioritize Rural Active Transportation Opportunities lists the updated objectives. The objectives are categorized as ‘key’ based on the prominence they had both in research and in speaking with stakeholders or ‘secondary’ because they have been identified as critical components when planning for rural active transportation but are not as directly aligned with the current broad strategic directions at HRM. Each objective has specific criteria, creating a scoring tool that will help the evaluator understand whether a community or a specific project meets (or has the potential to meet) the stated list of objectives for HRM’s rural active transportation network. This framework provides staff with a consistent and fair methodology to evaluate sidewalk requests as well as a process for how to begin planning proactively for sidewalks within rural communities.

	Objective	Criteria
Key Objectives	Create Connections High scoring communities tend to have opportunities to connect to local active transportation facilities, and/or regional facilities or transit.	Locally Connected: Schools/ Daycares
		Locally Connected: Commercial Areas
		Locally Connected: Libraries/ Communities Centres
		Locally Connected: Parks/ Trails
		Regionally Connected: Bus Stops or Terminals
		Regionally Connected: Regional AT Network Connections
		Regional Plan Priority
	Improve Safety High scoring communities tend to have relatively high volume of vehicles on the mainstreet daily.	Traffic Volume
		Traffic Speed
		Collision Rates
		Truck Traffic
	Foster Equity High scoring communities tend to have relatively high score on the Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation (CIMD).	Situational Vulnerability
		Economic Disparity
		Ethno-Cultural Composition
		African Nova Scotian Population
		Mi'kmaq Population
	Community Momentum High scoring communities tend to have community has an AT Plan (or community plan that addresses AT), and an active and engaged community group.	Accessible
		Active Transportation Related Plans
		Existing Community Groups
Secondary objectives	Cost Effectiveness High scoring communities tend to have opportunity to integrate project with other projects, and/or receive funding or cost sharing from other levels of government.	Population Density
		Funding/ Cost-Sharing
		Project Integration
	Economic Opportunity High scoring communities tend to have a “mainstreet” area.	Blue Route
		Economic Generation Opportunity
	Shift Mode Share High scoring communities tend to have relatively high number of residents walking/ cycling in the community daily.	Connects (or is part of) a Culturally Significant Area
		Current Users (Streetlight Data, 2019)
		Tavel Choices (Census Data, 2021)

Table 1 - *Updated Criteria Used to Evaluate and Prioritize Rural Active Transportation Opportunities*

¹ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230207rc1511.pdf> - page 9

The five highest scoring communities are Porters Lake, Upper Tantallon, Hubbards, Musquodoboit Harbour, and Lucasville. High scoring trends among these communities are detailed in *Table 1*. The most consistent criteria in high scoring communities is the presence of community momentum, meaning a community has an existing active transportation related plan(s), and/or active/known community groups who have expressed intentions of creating an active transportation related plan.

Sheet Harbour was not analyzed, as this community already has a sidewalk on their mainstreet. East Preston was not analyzed as this community is already scheduled to receive a multi-use pathway on their mainstreet in Summer 2024.

Table 2- Candidate Community Evaluation & Prioritization Results below shows the results of the analysis using the framework for the seventeen candidate communities.

Rank	Candidate community	Create connections	Improve safety	Foster equity	Community momentum	Cost effectiveness	Economic opportunity	Shift mode share
1	Porters Lake							
2	Upper Tantallon							
3	Hubbards							
4	Musquodoboit Harbour							
5	Lucasville							
6	Hammonds Plains/ Stillwater Lake							
7	Lake Echo							
8	Hatchet Lake/Brookside							
9	Hubley							
10	Windsor Junction							
11	Wellington							
12	Middle Musquodoboit							
13	Cow Bay							
14	Sambro							
15	Dutch Settlement							
n/a	Sheet Harbour	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
n/a	East Preston	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Scoring Legend

LOW				MED				HIGH
-----	--	--	--	-----	--	--	--	------

Table 2- Candidate Community Evaluation & Prioritization Results

2. Prioritized Communities Overviews

2.1. Porters Lake

Porters Lake² was prioritized among the seventeen candidate communities as it scored high on most criteria outlined in *Table 1*. Outlined below are some of the characteristics resulting in the prioritization of this community:

- Identified as a Rural Growth Centre in the Municipal Regional Plan (2014).
- Existing community planning and engagement through the Active Transportation Plan Porters Lake and Surrounding Communities (2014)³ and Porters Lake Business Association Infrastructure Improvement Plan (2022)⁴, identifying a village centre/mainstreet and outlining preliminary interest in sidewalks.
- The community is a destination for surrounding communities for school, employment, groceries, restaurants, retail and small businesses, and recreation.

To identify the preliminary area rate boundary, the following criteria was used:

- Mainstreet has regional destination(s), such as a grocery store, pharmacy, and home improvement store, and local destination(s), such as restaurants, cafes, retail stores, services, and places of worship. This informs that neighbouring communities likely rely on Porters Lake for services.
- Vehicle travel patterns⁵ along Trunk 7 indicate the scale of daily motor vehicle trips originating from other communities and informs which neighboring communities may be generating the need for safe and separated sidewalks in Porters Lake.
- School catchment boundaries⁶ for Porters Lake Elementary, O'Connell Drive Elementary School, informs which neighbouring communities may benefit from sidewalks in Porters Lake.

2.2. Upper Tantallon

Upper Tantallon⁷ was prioritized among the seventeen candidate communities as it scored high on most criteria outlined in *Table 1*. Outlined below are some of the characteristics resulting in the prioritization of this community:

- Identified as a Rural Growth Centre in the Municipal Regional Plan (2014).
- Existing community planning and engagement through the Municipal Regional Plan, identifying a village centre/mainstreet and outlining preliminary interest in sidewalks (see Tantallon Crossroads Coastal Village Sub-Designations Map⁸ and the Municipal Planning Strategy - Planning Districts 1 and 3 (St. Margarets Bay)⁹).
- The community is a destination for school, community and employment services, groceries, restaurants, retail and small businesses, and recreation.

To identify the preliminary area rate boundary, the following criteria was used:

- Mainstreet has regional destination(s), such as a grocery store and pharmacy, and home improvement store, and local destination(s), such as restaurants, cafes, retail stores, services, and places of worship. This informs that neighbouring communities likely rely on Upper Tantallon for services.

² <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/porters-lake-community-overview.pdf>

³ satatrails.ca/docs/Porters_Lake_AT_Plan_FINAL.pdf

⁴ [Projects — Porters Lake Business Association](#)

⁵ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/final_porters-lake_travel-patterns-map.pdf

⁶ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/final_porters-lake_school-catchment-boundary.pdf

⁷ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/upper-tantallon-community-overview.pdf>

⁸ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/planningdistricts1and3-mps-eff-23oct13-case2023-002-toclinked.pdf>

⁹ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/PlanningDistrict1and3_MPS_Map1GFLUM.pdf

- Vehicle travel patterns¹⁰ along St. Margarets Bay Road indicate the scale of daily motor vehicle trips originating from other communities, informs which neighboring communities may be generating the need for safe and separated sidewalks in Upper Tantallon.
- School catchment boundaries¹¹ for Bay View High School, Tantallon Jr/Sr Elementary School, informs which neighbouring communities may benefit from sidewalks in Upper Tantallon.

2.3. Hubbards Overview

Hubbards¹² was prioritized among the seventeen candidate communities as it scored high on most criteria outlined in *Table 1*. Outlined below are some of the characteristics resulting in the prioritization of this community:

- Identified as a Rural Growth Centre in the Municipal Regional Plan (2014).
- Existing community planning and engagement through the Hubbards Community Plan (2022)¹³, identifying a village centre/mainstreet and outlining preliminary interest in sidewalks.
- The community is a destination for school, community and employment services, groceries, restaurants, retail and small businesses, and recreation.

To identify the preliminary area rate boundary, the following criteria was used:

- Mainstreet has regional destination(s), such as a grocery store, pharmacy, and home improvement store, and local destination(s), such as restaurants, cafes, retail stores, services, and places of worship. This informs that neighbouring communities likely rely on Hubbards for services.
- Vehicle travel patterns¹⁴ along Trunk 3 indicate the scale of daily motor vehicle trips originating from other communities, inform which neighboring communities may be generating the need for safe and separated sidewalks in Hubbards.
- School catchment boundaries¹⁵ for Shatford Memorial Elementary School inform which neighbouring communities may benefit from sidewalks in Hubbards.

2.4. Musquodoboit Harbour Overview

Musquodoboit Harbour¹⁶ was prioritized among the seventeen candidate communities as it scored high on most criteria outlined in *Table 1*. Outlined below are some of the characteristics resulting in the prioritization of this community:

- Identified as a Rural Growth Centre in the Municipal Regional Plan (2014).
- Existing community planning and engagement through the Musquodoboit Harbour Community Development Plan (2017)¹⁷, identifying a village centre/mainstreet and outlining preliminary interest in sidewalks.
- The community is a destination for school, healthcare, community and employment services, restaurants, retail and small businesses, and recreation.

To identify the preliminary area rate boundary, the following criteria was used:

- Mainstreet has regional destination(s), such as a hospital, pharmacy, and home improvement store, and local destination(s), such as restaurants, cafes, retail stores, and services. This informs that neighbouring communities likely rely on Musquodoboit Harbour for services.

¹⁰ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/final_upper-tantallon_travel-patterns-map.pdf

¹¹ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/final_upper-tantallon_school-catchment-boundary-map.pdf

¹² https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/hubbards-community-overview_0_0.pdf

¹³ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220614rci01.pdf>

¹⁴ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/hubbards-travel-patterns-map_1.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/hubbards-school-catchment-boundary-map.pdf>

¹⁶ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/musquodoboit-harbour_community-overview.pdf

¹⁷ [Musquodoboit Harbour Community Development Plan - Nov 23/21 Regional Council | Halifax.ca](https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/musquodoboit-harbour_community-overview.pdf)

- Vehicle travel patterns¹⁸ along Trunk 7 indicate the scale of daily motor vehicle trips originating from other communities, informs which neighboring communities may be generating the need for safe and separated sidewalks in Musquodboit Harbour.
- School catchment boundaries¹⁹ for Eastern Shore District High School, informs which neighbouring communities may benefit from sidewalks in Musquodboit Harbour.

2.5. Lucasville Overview

Lucasville²⁰ was prioritized among the seventeen candidate communities as it scored high on most criteria outlined in *Table 1*. Outlined below are some of the characteristics resulting in the prioritization of this community:

- Identified as a Rural Local Centre in the Municipal Regional Plan (2014).
- Existing community planning and engagement through the Lucasville Active Transportation Plan (2021)²¹, identifying a village centre and outlining preliminary interest in sidewalks.
- The community mainstreet Lucasville Road is a destination/cut-through for the region.
- The community is a Historic African Nova Scotian community.

To identify the preliminary area rate boundary, the following criteria was used:

- The mainstreet (Lucasville Road itself) is a regional destination to neighboring communities, however destinations on Lucasville Road are not.
- Vehicle travel patterns²² along Lucasville Road indicate the scale of daily motor vehicle trips originating from other communities, informs which neighboring communities may be generating the need for safe and separated sidewalks in Lucasville.
- There is no school in Lucasville.

¹⁸ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/final_musquodoboit-harbour_travel-patterns-map.pdf

¹⁹ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/final_musquodoboit-harbour_school-catchment-boundary-map.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/lucasville-community-overview.pdf>

²¹ Microsoft Word - 181-11813 - Lucasville AT - Final Report - Rev 1 - 30042021.docx

²² <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/lucasvilletravelpatternsmmap.pdf>

Sidewalks in Rural Community Centres

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November 14, 2024

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1. Introduction

The Rural Active Transportation (AT) Program was approved by Regional Council on [February 8, 2022¹](#), following recommendations from the [Integrated Mobility Plan](#) and [Active Transportation \(AT\) Priorities Plan](#). On [February 7, 2023²](#), Council adopted the [Administrative Order Respecting the Implementation of Area Rates to Fund Sidewalks Outside of the Urban Tax Area in the Halifax Regional Municipality \(AO 2022-008-ADM\)³](#) to guide consideration and implementation of the Rural AT Program and approved 17 candidate communities to be considered for implementation.

The priority under the program is the construction of sidewalks or multi-use pathways⁴ (wider paved pathways) in rural community centers to provide safer and more accessible options for those who walk, cycle and roll - creating improved connections that help support overall community development. The first five out of seventeen candidate communities were prioritized based on criteria such as population density, safety, equity, community planning and advocacy, and number of local or regional destinations.

- Porters Lake
- Musquodoboit Harbour
- Hubbards
- Upper Tantallon
- Lucasville

Community engagement followed the process outline in AO 2022-008-ADM and included various levels of interaction with both stakeholders (government representatives and community organizations) and the public (property owners and residents identified in the preliminary area rate boundaries).

The What We Heard Report details the notification and engagement scope, methodology and results, in each of the five prioritized communities.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement meetings and correspondence in all five candidate communities occurred between October 2023 and May 2024. Stakeholder groups are outlined in Table 1. Many of these groups have a history of advocating for sidewalks and/or active transportation in the candidate communities and surrounding areas. The purpose of the meetings was to:

- Inform stakeholders that their community was shortlisted and being assessed for implementation of an area rate to fund sidewalks in their community centre;
- Discuss any previous community-led initiatives and perspectives or concerns relative to active transportation and their possible impact during community engagement; and
- Outline the priority under the Rural AT Program and learn their perspectives on: (1) sidewalks in rural community centres, (2) the potential addition of an area rate to become eligible for sidewalks, and (3) the preliminary area rate boundary to be used for public notification.

¹ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220208rc1554.pdf>

² <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230207rc1512.pdf>

³ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2022-008-adm.pdf>

⁴ Moving forward the report will only use sidewalks when referring to this infrastructure.

Candidate Community	Stakeholder
Porters Lake	Porters Lake Business Association
	District 2 Regional Councilor David Hendsbee
	Eastern Shore MLA, Honorable Kent Smith
Musquodoboit Harbour	Musquodoboit Harbour & Area Chamber of Commerce & Civic Affairs
	District 2 Regional Councilor David Hendsbee
	Eastern Shore MLA, Honorable Kent Smith
Hubbards	Hubbards Streetscape Project Committee
	District 13 Regional Councilor Pam Lovelace
Upper Tantallon	St. Margaret's Bay Community Enterprise Centre
	District 13 Regional Councilor Pam Lovelace
Lucasville	Lucasville Greenway Society
	Lucasville Community Association
	Wallace Lucas Community Centre
	Lucasville Education Committee Society
	District 14 Regional Councilor Lisa Blackburn

Table 1: List of stakeholders.

3. Public Notification

Public notification was submitted by HRM staff for printing and mailing to property owners and residents within the preliminary area rate boundaries at least two weeks prior to in-person public meetings between January 2024 and April 2024. Addressed notification letters to property owners⁵ and residents were measured and supplemented as outlined in Table 2.

Additional notification was provided as PSAs on Municipal Digital Screens and by Regional Councillors in their newsletters, social media, and local community groups/Facebook groups. Additional notification for Porters Lake and Musquodoboit Harbour was posted to the Eastern Shore Cooperator.

Notification		Porters Lake	Musquodoboit Harbour	Hubbards	Upper Tantallon	Lucasville
# notification letters delivered ⁶ in each preliminary area rate boundary		5,102	2,395	1,037	3,717	1,054
Location targeted advertisements	# clicks	1,192	1,144	1,617	1,324	582
	# reaches ⁷	15,365	17,735	30,553	17,303	20,444
	# impressions ⁸	132,865	126,655	129,048	76,270	48,184
Facebook posts	# comments	123	231	102	53	15
	# shares	32	31	27	18	23
	# reactions	106	91	91	35	17
# visitors ⁹ to Shape Your City webpage		5,201	2,071	923	2,225	255

Table 2: Notification methods.

⁵ See [Halifax Shape Your City Webpage](#) for notification letters sent to each candidate communities preliminary area rate boundary.

⁶ Delivered: The total letters sent minus letters returned due to undeveloped land, inaccurate address, or unknown.

⁷ Reaches: The number of Facebook and Instagram accounts that saw the ads at least once.

⁸ Impressions: An impression is counted as the number of times an instance of an ad is on screen for the first time.

⁹ Visitors: Approximate number of initial webpage visits from unique IP addresses.

4. Public Engagement

Public engagement occurred for at least four weeks in each of the five communities. The purpose of community engagement was for staff to:

- Inform public of the candidate communities that were shortlisted and the respective preliminary boundary that was being assessed for implementation of an area rate to fund sidewalks in the candidate community centre;
- Present information and data related to the Rural AT Program, previous community planning in the candidate community areas and HRM taxation;
- Learn how communities identified within the preliminary area rate boundary use mainstreet in the candidate community; and
- Learn community perspectives and possible concerns relative to the project's components to include as data to support recommendations to Regional Council.

The engagement methods, as outlined in Table 3 considered numerous opportunities for the public to access information and provide feedback on the project. These methods included:

- In-person public meetings with presentations, Q&A sessions with staff, councillors (when present), and community stakeholders (when present);
- Halifax.ca website and Halifax Shape Your City webpage and online survey;
- Paper survey option that was widely distributed at public meetings, and through libraries, community centres, provincial and municipal representatives, local advocates, or by direct mail at recipient's request; and
- Designated staff email and phone to receive feedback.

Engagement		Porters Lake	Musquodoboit Harbour	Hubbards	Upper Tantallon	Lucasville
Public meetings (in-person)	# meetings	4	2	4	3	2
	# participants	319	159	134	154	83
# online survey ¹⁰ received		1,667	555	208	717	239
Paper survey	# distributed	418	67	64	58	19
	# received	110	325	326	300	200
# emails with feedback		45	8	5	5	3
# phone calls with feedback		20	10	5	2	5

Table 3: Engagement participation.

Staff received additional written submissions in response to the public engagements:

- Honorable Kent Smith, Eastern Shore MLA submitted a letter that summarizes and offers support for the public opinion as per the MLA's observations from his attendance and participation in the public meetings for Porters Lake and Musquodoboit Harbour. (See *Attachment –Stakeholder's Written Submissions*)
- Lucasville Greenway Society submitted written communication pertaining to Lucasville engagement, requesting that Lucasville is considered for a tax exemption to acknowledge a history of service inequities historically experienced by residents in this community due to the municipality's policies (see (see Section 7. Engagement Results- Qualitative Data Analysis- page 23).
- The Municipal Clerks' Office received a petition pertaining to the Porters Lake engagement that was presented in Regional Council on March 19, 2024, signed by 650 property owners and residents in the Porters Lake area¹¹.

¹⁰ See [Halifax Shape Your City Webpage](#) for the printed survey version (same as online survey) for each candidate community.

¹¹ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240319rc-mins.pdf>

5. Participation Summary

The population (18+ only)¹² and the number of registered properties¹³ were calculated for each community within the preliminary area rate boundaries, as seen in Table 4 to Table 8 to show if public meeting attendance and survey responses from each of these communities was proportionate and representative of their potential participation.

Community within Porters Lake Preliminary Area Rate Boundary	Population (18+)	# Registered Properties	# Meeting Attendees	# Survey Responses
Porters Lake	3167	2184	133	574
West Chezzetcook	884	768	25	145
East Lawrencetown	696	508	32	135
West Porters Lake	691	430	30	170
Gaetz Brook	454	412	16	118
East Chezzetcook	454	481	12	87
Head of Chezzetcook	416	357	21	84
Seaforth	303	447	8	71
Grand Desert	283	329	4	63
Conrod Settlement	247	347	6	41
Three Fathom Harbour	224	215	4	55
Lower East Chezzetcook	208	302	2	32
Middle Porters Lake	110	63	4	24
Lower Three Fathom Harbour	16	27	0	4
Other Communities/Unknown	-	-	22	174
Total	8153	6870	319	1777

Table 4: Porters Lake meeting attendance and survey response relevance.

Community within Musquodoboit Harbour Preliminary Area Rate Boundary	Population (18+)	# Registered Properties	# Meeting Attendees	# Survey Responses
Musquodoboit Harbour	1039	926	45	172
East Petpeswick	658	506	32	73
Head of Jeddore	516	456	23	74
Ostrea Lake	456	444	17	76
Myers Point	214	164	6	40
West Jeddore	214	248	6	40
West Petpeswick	212	274	20	53
Pleasant Point	80	112	0	9
Smith's Settlement	79	42	0	10
Other Communities/Unknown	-	-	10	75
Total	7445	4444	299	775

Table 5: Musquodoboit Harbour meeting attendance and survey response relevance.

¹² Source: Statistics Canada (2021), ESRI Data Enrichment (2023), Environics

¹³ Source: HRM ESRI Database (2023)

Community within Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Boundary	Population (18+)	# Registered Properties	# Meeting Attendees	# Survey Responses
Hubbards	502	673	75	159
Queensland	445	519	28	58
Black Point	200	226	17	53
Other Communities/Unknown	-	-	14	2
Total	1147	1418	134	272

Table 6: Hubbards meeting attendance and survey response relevance.

Community within Upper Tantallon Preliminary Area Rate Boundary	Population (18+ only)	# Registered Properties	# Meeting Attendees	# Survey Responses
Upper Tantallon	3149	1691	41	296
Stillwater Lake	2015	907	44	259
Head of St Margaret's Bay	1088	954	28	103
Tantallon	749	583	23	68
Lewis Lake	444	309	9	48
Other Communities/Unknown	-	-	9	1
Total	7445	4444	154	775

Table 7: Upper Tantallon meeting attendance and survey response relevance.

Community within Lucasville Preliminary Area Rate Boundary	Population (18+ only)	# Registered Properties	# Meeting Attendees	# Survey Responses
Lucasville	1717	1201	75	200
Hammonds Plains/Middle Sackville/Lower Sackville	428	210	7	58
Other Communities/Unknown	-	-	1	0
Total	2145	1411	83	258

Table 8: Lucasville meeting attendance and survey response relevance.

As outlined in Table 9, an overall survey participation rate was calculated for each survey, by dividing total number of survey responses from property owners and residents by the total number of letters delivered within each preliminary area rate boundary.

Survey	Survey Participation Rate
Porters Lake & Surrounding Area	35%
Musquodoboit Harbour & Surrounding Area	26%
Hubbards & Surrounding Area	26%
Upper Tantallon & Surrounding Area	21%
Lucasville & Surrounding Area	24%

Table 9: Survey participation rates relative to the total number of notification letters delivered to property owners and residents within each preliminary area rate boundary.

6. Engagement Results - Quantitative Data Analysis

This section analyzes responses from the online and paper surveys received for each candidate community. Throughout this section, “the project” refers to the implementation of sidewalks in rural community centers. Apart from understanding how survey respondents relate to one (or more) property(s) within the preliminary area rate boundary and use the candidate community, the survey was used to understand how respondents related to the three components of the project:

- What is their support for sidewalks in rural community centres?
- What is their support for the addition of an area rate to become eligible for sidewalks?
- What is their support for the preliminary area rate boundary?

6.1. Porters Lake & Surrounding Area Survey

Most respondents, from within the preliminary area rate boundary as outlined in Figure 1, live on a property they own.

- 93% live on their property
- 92% own their property
- A few rent or lease, run a business, or own a resource property
- Some own, rent, or lease multiple properties

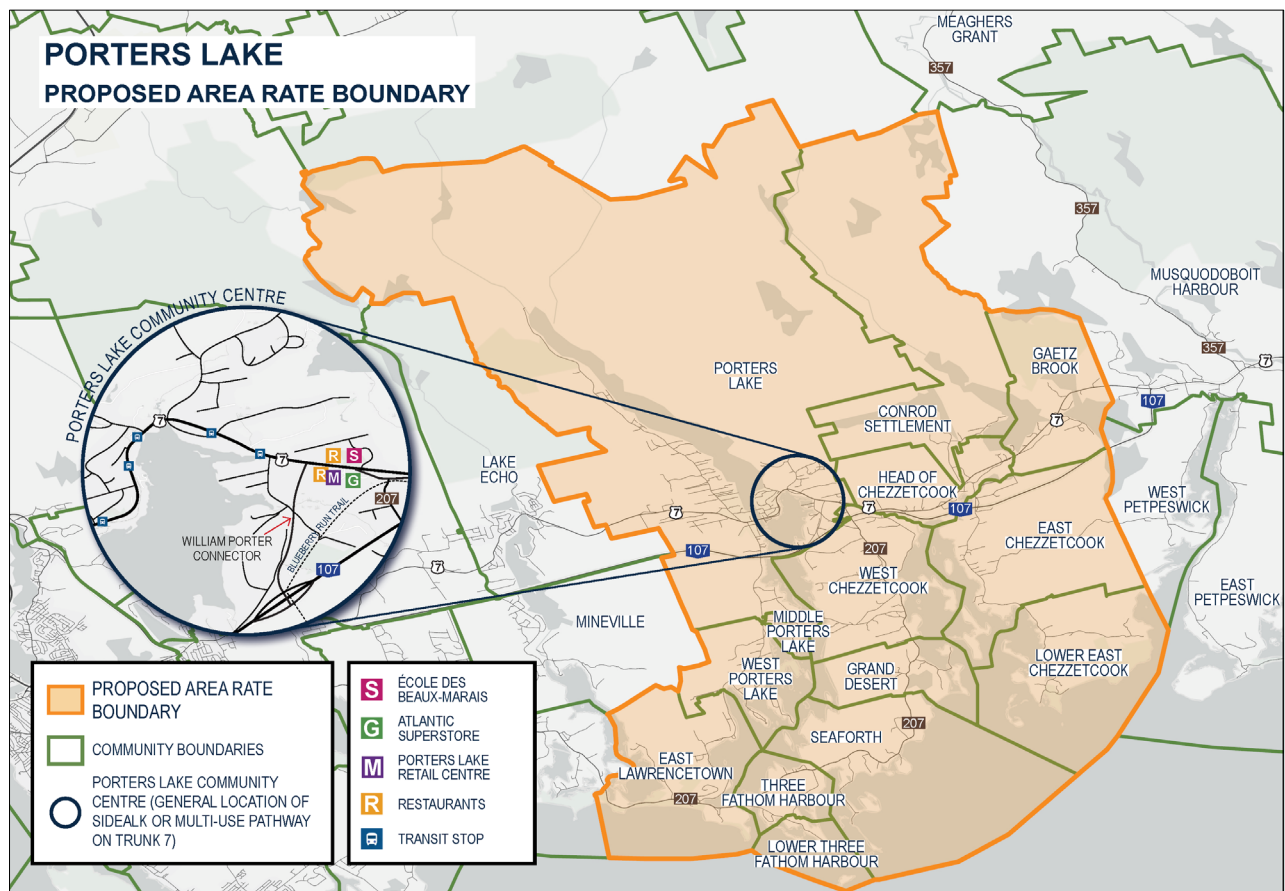


Figure 1 Map of Porters Lake proposed (preliminary) area rate boundary.

Some respondents use multiple types of destinations in Porters Lake. Most respondents, from all survey responses, use commercial/retail spaces in Porters Lake.

- 83% use commercial/retail spaces
- 36% recreate
- 30% visit family/friends
- Less use services, and/or attend work/school/daycare
- 13% responded 'other'

When selecting "other" many respondents detailed that they do not use Porters Lake often or at all and use alternative communities, such as Cole Harbour, Dartmouth, or Halifax, as a destination for shopping, services, and/or work etc.

Survey responses, as outlined in Figure 2 show a strong opposition towards all components of the project. From all survey responses, 83% do not support sidewalks being added on Trunk 7 in Porters Lake, 94% do not support the area rate, and 86% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary.

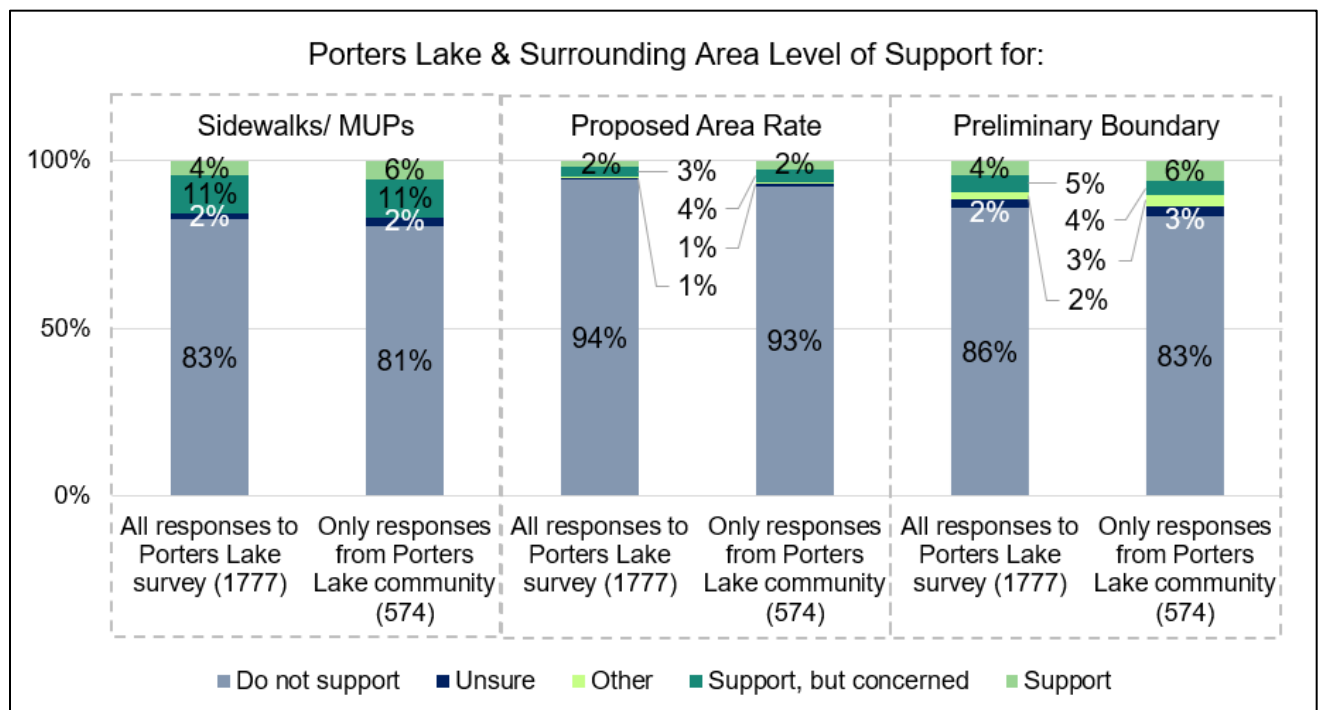


Figure 2 Graph showing results from Porters Lake & surrounding area survey.

- Opposition to sidewalks being added on Trunk 7 is consistent across all individual communities. At least 80% of respondents from each community, as listed in Table 4, do not support sidewalks.
- Opposition for the area rate (\$0.033/\$100 of taxable property value) is consistent across all individual communities. At least 91% of respondents from each community, as listed in Table 4, do not support it.
- Opposition to the preliminary area rate boundary is consistent across all individual communities. At least 83% of respondents from each community, as listed in Table 4, do not support it, except for Lower Three Fathom Harbour at 50% – however, it is important to note these outlier results are likely due to fewer survey responses from this community.

6.2. Musquodoboit Harbour & Surrounding Area Survey

Most respondents, from within the preliminary area rate boundary as outlined in Figure 3, live on a property they own.

- 91% live on their property
- 89% own their property
- A few rent or lease, run a business, or own a resource property
- Some own, rent, or lease multiple properties

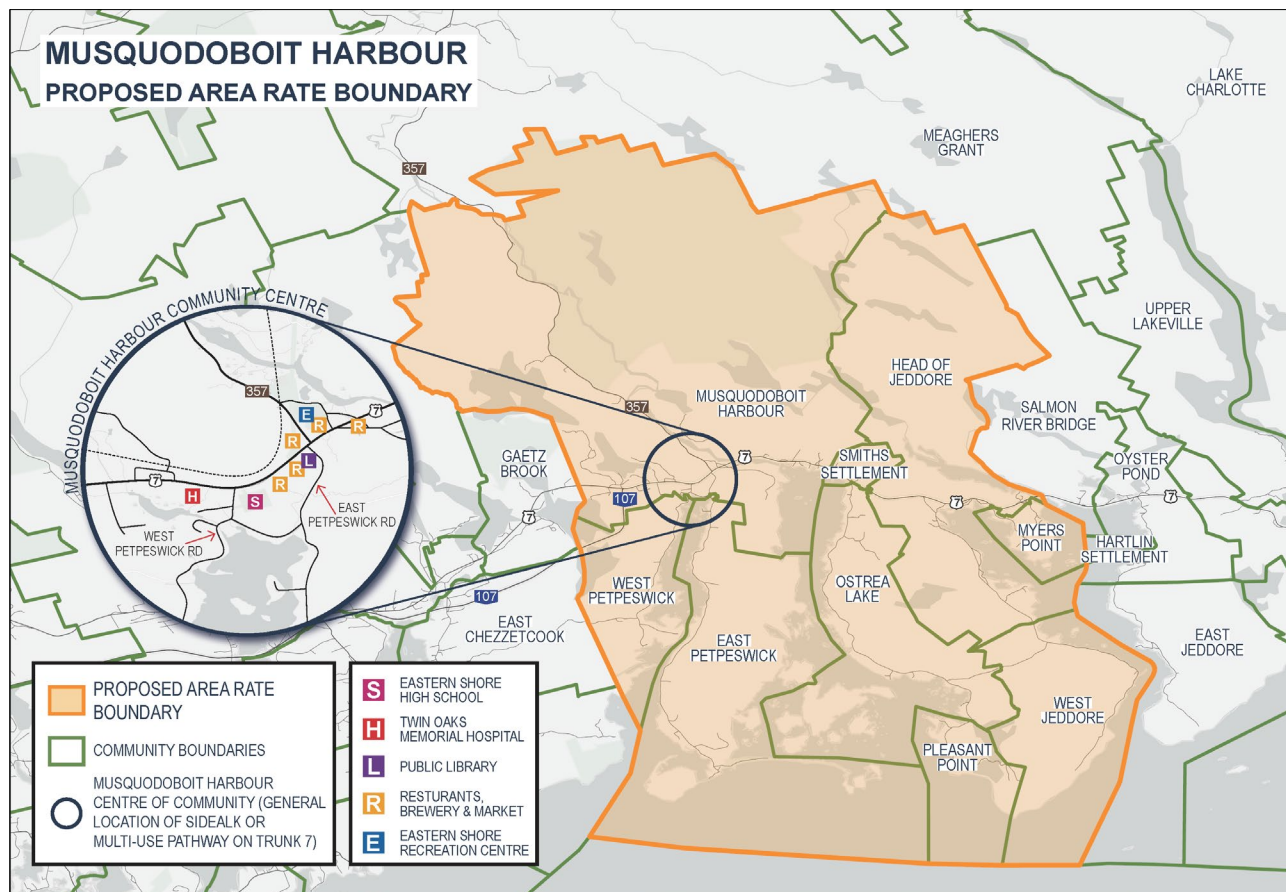


Figure 3 Map of Musquodoboit Harbour proposed (preliminary) area rate boundary.

Many respondents use multiple types of destinations in Musquodoboit Harbour. Most respondents, from all survey responses, use commercial/retail spaces in Musquodoboit Harbour.

- 79% use commercial/retail spaces
- 67% use services
- 56% recreate
- Less visit family/friends, and/or attend work/school/daycare
- 11% responded 'other'

When selecting "other" many respondents detailed that they do not use Musquodoboit Harbour often or at all and use alternative communities, such as Head of Jeddore, Porters Lake, Cole Harbour, Dartmouth, or Halifax, as a destination for shopping, services, and work.

Survey responses, as outlined Figure 4, show neither a strong opposition nor strong support towards most components of the project: From all survey responses, 57% do not support and 41% do support sidewalks being added on Trunk 7 in Musquodoboit Harbour; 78% do not support the area rate; and 64% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary.

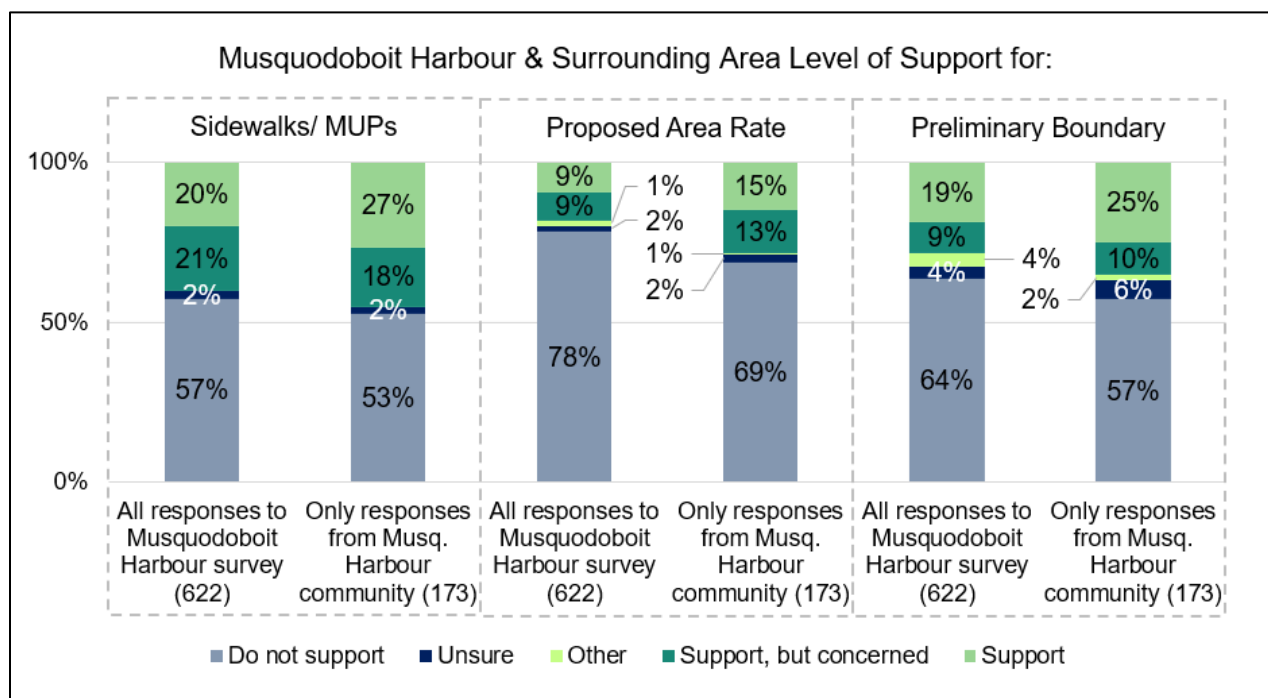


Figure 4 Graph showing results from Musquodoboit Harbour & surrounding area survey.

- Support for sidewalks being added on Trunk 7 is greater in individual communities that are closer to the proposed sidewalk. At least 42% to 55% of respondents from West Petpeswick, Musquodoboit Harbour, and East Petpeswick support it or support it, but have concerns. Support is highest in Smiths Settlement at 60% – however, it is important to note the outlier results are likely due to fewer survey responses from this community.
- Opposition for sidewalks being added on Trunk 7 is greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 58% to 65% of respondents in remaining individual communities, as listed in Table 5, do not support it. Opposition is highest in Pleasant Point at 78% - however, it is important to note the outlier results are likely due to fewer survey responses from this community.
- Opposition for the area rate (\$0.033/\$100 of taxable property value) is consistent across all individual communities. At least 69% to 88% of respondents in all individual communities, as listed in Table 5, do not support it.
- Opposition for the preliminary area rate boundary is less in individual communities that are closer, and greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. In Smiths Settlement, East Petpeswick, and Musquodoboit Harbour, at least 50% to 57% of respondents do not support it. Of the remaining individual communities, as listed in Table 5, at least 66% to 78% do not support it.

6.3. Hubbards & Surrounding Area Survey

Most respondents, from within the preliminary area rate boundary as outlined in Figure 5, live on a property they own.

- 90% live on their property
- 91% own their property
- A few rent or lease, run a business, or own a resource property
- Some own, rent, or lease multiple properties

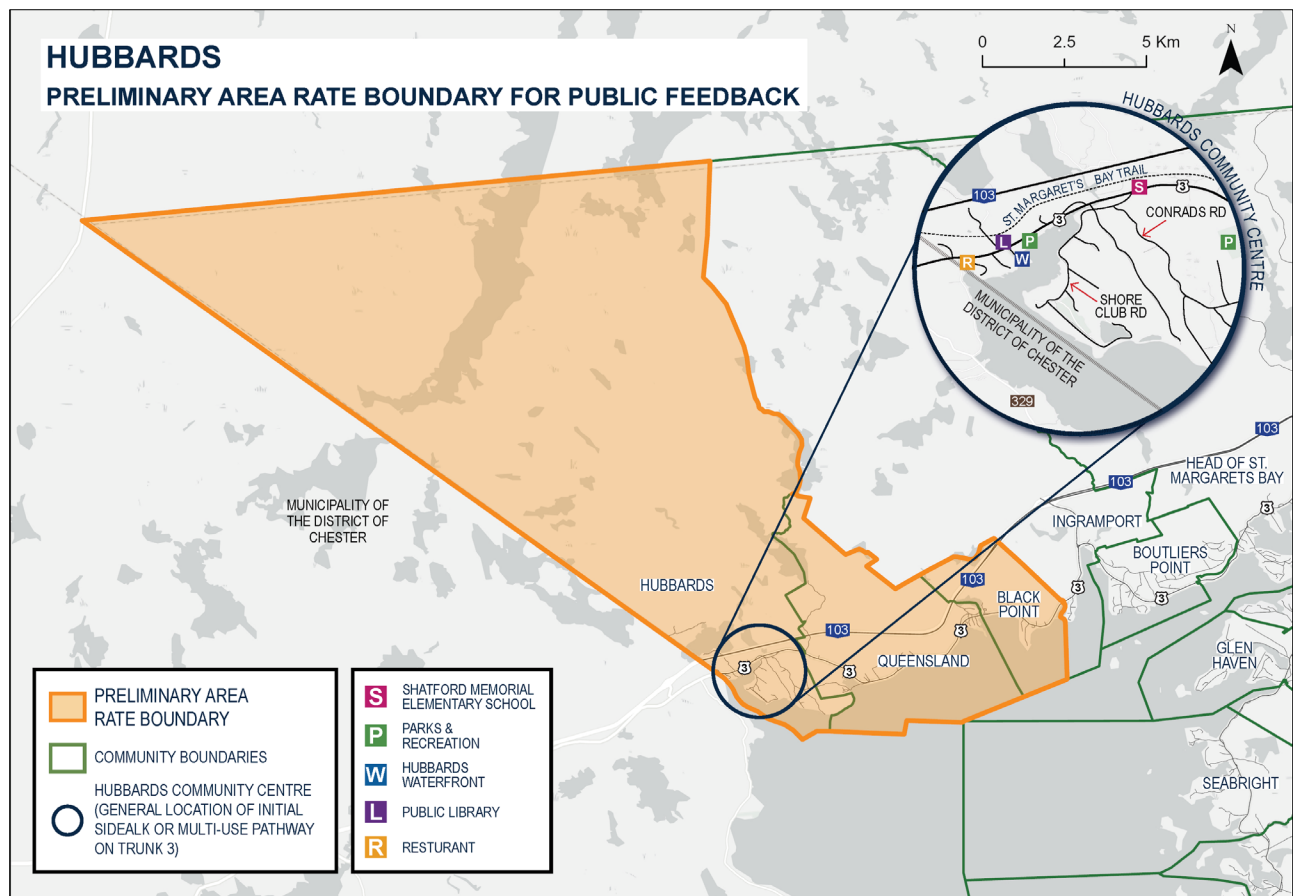


Figure 5 Map of Hubbards preliminary area rate boundary.

Many respondents use multiple types of destinations in Hubbards. Most respondents, from all survey responses, use commercial/retail spaces in Hubbards.

- 79% commercial/retail spaces
- 66% use services
- 66% recreate
- 56% visit family/friends
- Less attend work/school/daycare
- 13% responded 'other'

When selecting "other" many respondents detailed that they do not use Hubbards often or at all and use alternative communities, such as Chester, Upper Tantallon, Bayers Lake, or Halifax, as a destination for shopping, services, and work.

Survey responses, as outlined in Figure 6, show neither a strong opposition nor strong support towards all components of the project: From all survey responses, 65% do support sidewalks being added on Trunk 3 in Hubbards; 48% do not support and 48% do support the area rate; and 47% do not support and 44% do support the preliminary area rate boundary.

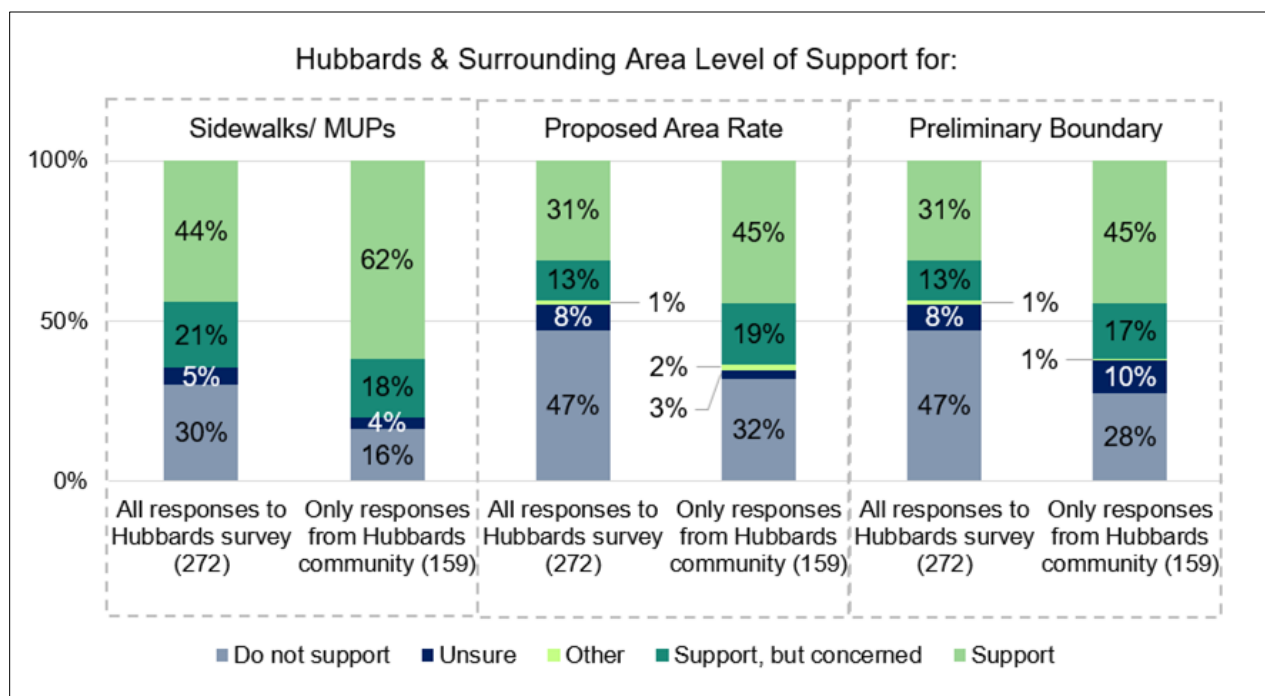


Figure 6 Graph showing results from Hubbards & surrounding area survey.

- Support for sidewalks being added on Trunk 3 is greater in individual communities that are closer to the proposed sidewalk. At least 81% of respondents from Hubbards and 50% of respondents from Queensland support it or support it but have concerns.
- Opposition for sidewalks being added on Trunk 3 is greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 57% of respondents from Black Point do not support it.
- Support for the area rate (\$0.033/\$100 of taxable property value) is greater in individual communities that are closer to the proposed sidewalk. At least 64% of respondents from Hubbards support it or support it but have concerns.
- Opposition for the area rate (\$0.033/\$100 of taxable property value) is greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 66% to 70% of respondents from Queensland and Black Point do not support it.
- Support for the preliminary area rate boundary is greater in individual communities that are closer to the proposed sidewalk. At least 62% of respondents from Hubbards support it or support it but have concerns.
- Opposition for the preliminary area rate boundary is greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 66% of respondents from Queensland and 87% of Black Point do not support it.

6.4. Upper Tantallon & Surrounding Area Survey

Most respondents, from within the preliminary area rate boundary as outlined in Figure 7, live on a property they own.

- 88% live on their property
- 90% own their property
- A few rent or lease, run a business, or own a resource property
- Some own, rent, or lease multiple properties

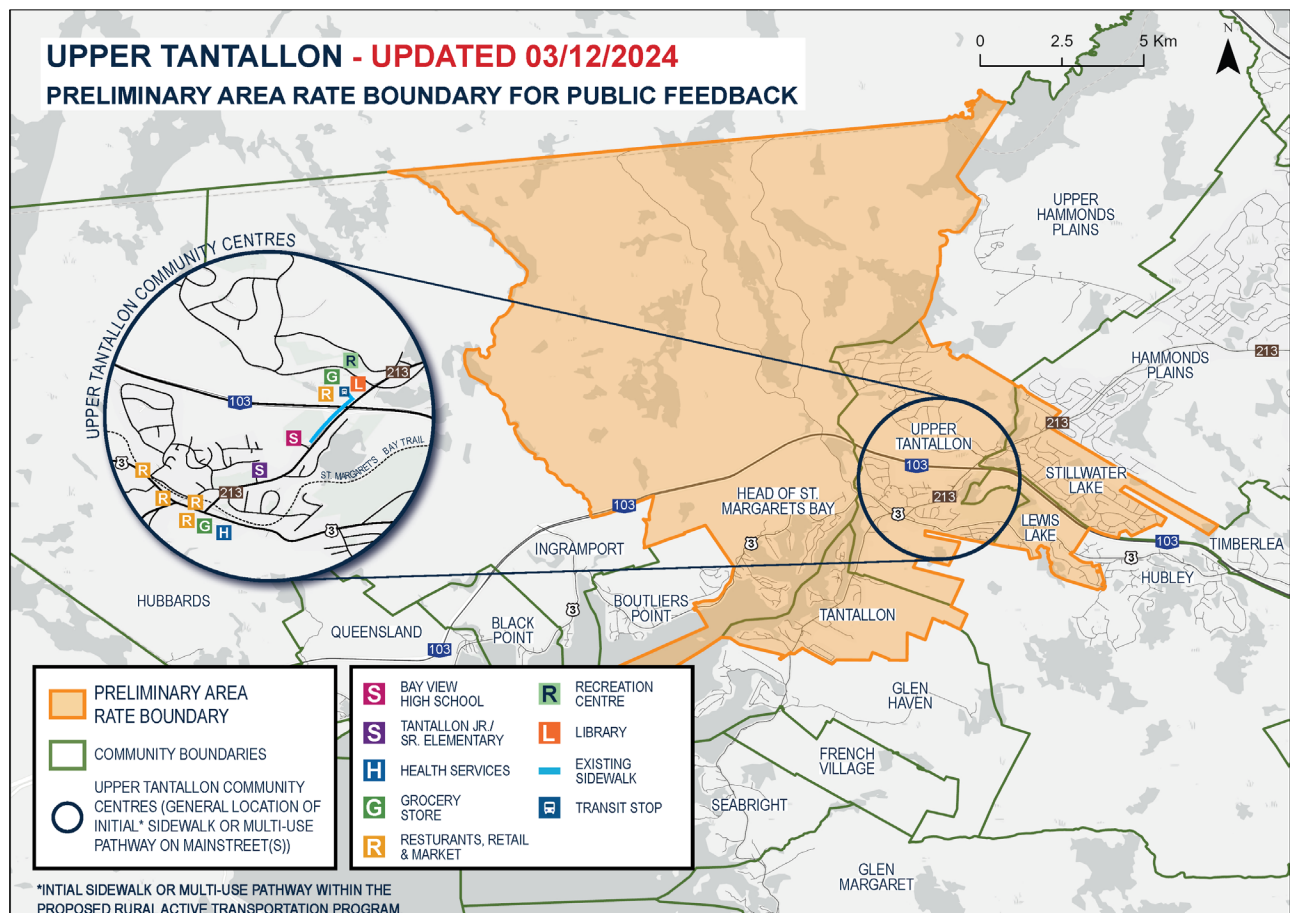


Figure 7 Map of Upper Tantallon preliminary area rate boundary.

Many respondents use multiple types of destinations in Upper Tantallon. Most respondents, from all survey responses, use commercial/retail spaces, services and/or recreate in Upper Tantallon.

- 78% use commercial/retail spaces
- 76% use services
- 76% recreate
- 63% visit family/friends
- Less attend work/school/daycare
- 6% responded 'other'

When selecting "other" many respondents detailed that they do not use Upper Tantallon often or at all and use alternative communities, such as Bayers Lake or Halifax, as a destination for shopping, services, and work.

Survey responses, as outlined in Figure 8, show an opposition towards most components of the project: From all survey responses, 70% do not support sidewalks being added to Upper Tantallon, 78% do not support the area rate, and 63% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary proposed.

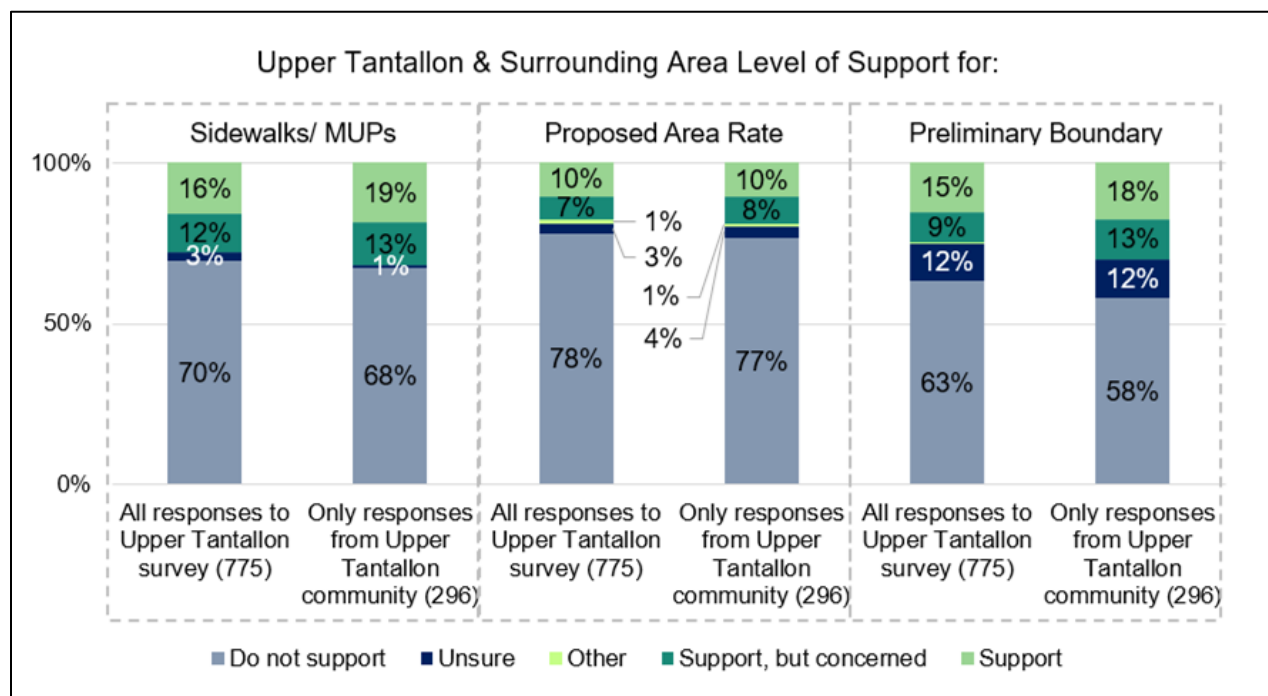


Figure 8 Graph showing results from Upper Tantallon & surrounding area survey.

- Opposition for sidewalks being added to Upper Tantallon is less in individual communities that are south and west of the proposed sidewalk and greater in individual communities that are north and east from the proposed sidewalk. At least 53% to 56% of respondents from Tantallon and Head of St. Margaret's Bay do not support it; and at least 68% to 81% of respondents from Upper Tantallon, Lewis Lake, and Stillwater Lake do not support it.
- Opposition for the area rate (\$0.033/\$100 of taxable property value) is less in individual communities west of the proposed sidewalk and greater in individual communities that are north, east, and south from the proposed sidewalk. At least 61% of respondents from head of St. Margaret's Bay do not support it; and at least 72% to 88% of respondents from Tantallon, Lewis Lake, Upper Tantallon, and Stillwater Lake do not support it.
- Opposition for the preliminary area rate boundary is less in individual communities west of the proposed sidewalk and greater in individual communities that are north, east, and south from the proposed sidewalk. At least 56% to 58% of respondents from Head of St. Margaret's Bay and Upper Tantallon do not support it; and at least 62% to 73% of respondents in Tantallon, Lewis Lake, and Stillwater Lake do not support it.

6.5. Lucasville & Surrounding Area Survey

Most respondents, from within the preliminary area rate boundary as outlined in Figure 9, live on a property they own.

- 83% live on their property
- 86% own their property
- A few rent or lease, run a business, or own a resource property
- Some own, rent, or lease multiple properties

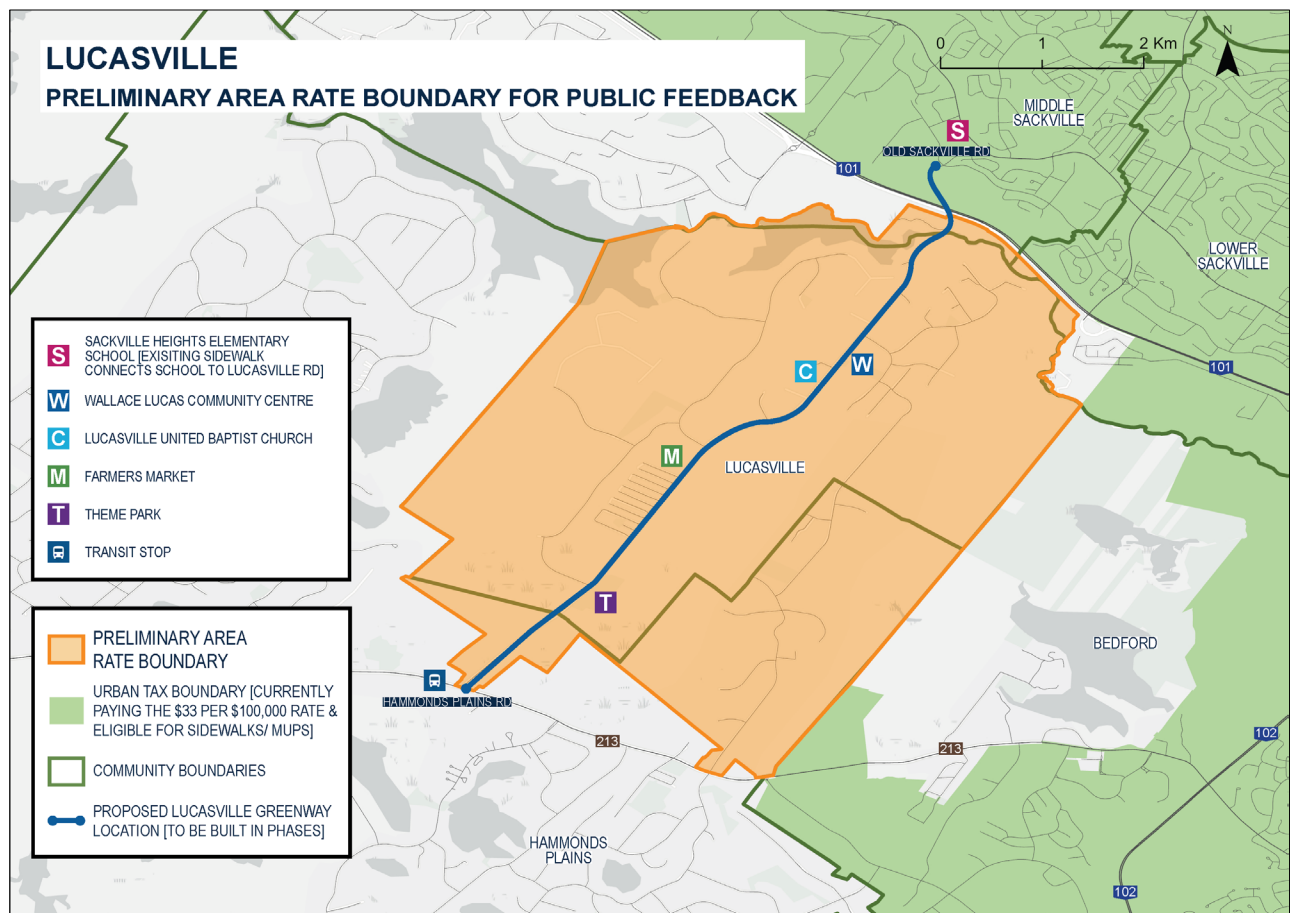


Figure 9 Map of Lucasville preliminary area rate boundary.

Some respondents use multiple types of destinations in Lucasville. Some respondents, from all survey responses, use the commercial/retail spaces and recreate in Lucasville.

- 40% use commercial/retail spaces
- 39% recreate
- 30% visit family/friends
- Less attend work/school/daycare, and/or use services
- 31% responded 'other'

When selecting "other" many respondents detailed that they do not use Lucasville often or at all and use alternative communities, such as Lower Sackville, Bedford, or Halifax, as a destination for shopping, services, and work.

Survey responses, as outlined in Figure 10, show neither a strong opposition nor strong support towards most components of the project: From all survey responses, 49% do not support and 49% do support sidewalks being added on Lucasville Road in Lucasville; 60% do not support the area rate; and 52% do not support the preliminary area rate boundary.

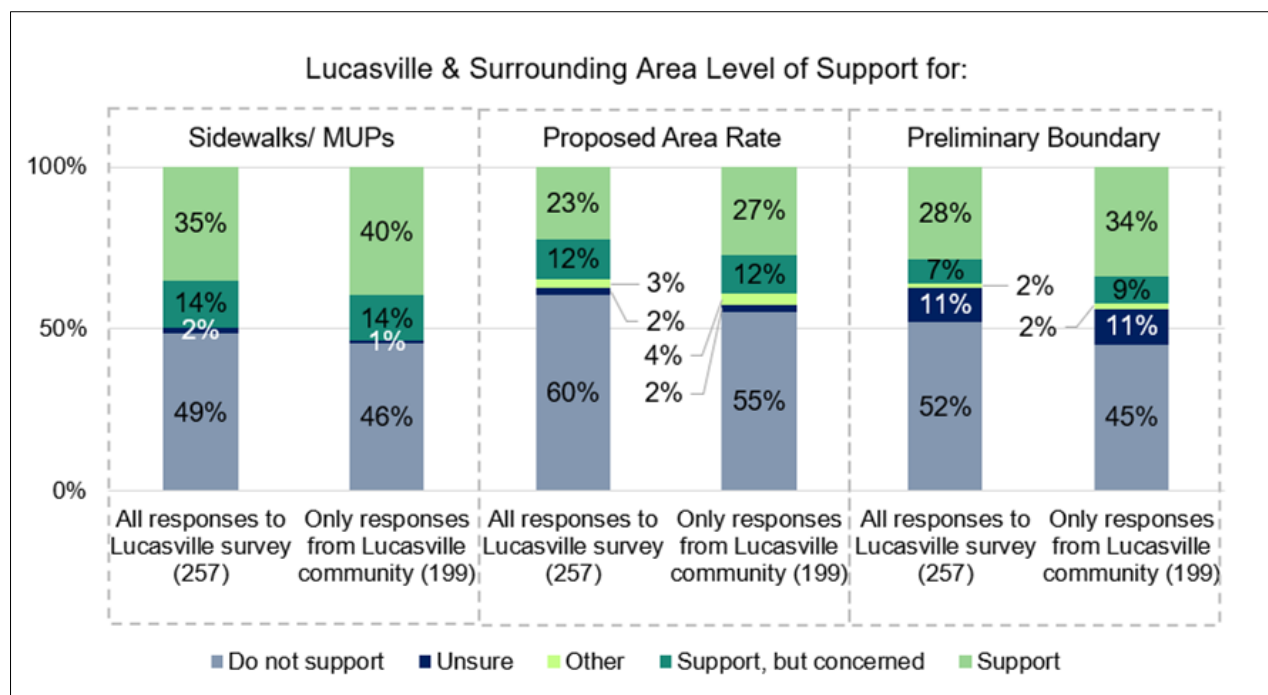


Figure 10 Graph showing results from Lucasville & surrounding area survey.

- Support for sidewalks being added on Lucasville Road is greater in individual communities that are closer to the proposed sidewalk. At least 54% of respondents from Lucasville support it or support it but have concerns.
- Opposition for sidewalks being added on Lucasville Road is greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 59% of respondents from Hammonds Plains, Lower Sackville, and Middle Sackville (from within the preliminary area rate boundary) do not support it.
- Opposition for the area rate (\$0.033/\$100 of taxable property value) is less in individual communities closer to the proposed sidewalk and greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 55% of respondents from Lucasville do not support it; and at least 78% of respondents from Hammonds Plains, Lower Sackville, and Middle Sackville (from within the preliminary area rate boundary) do not support it.
- Support for the preliminary area rate boundary is greater in individual communities that are closer to the proposed sidewalk. At least 43% of respondents from Lucasville support it or support it but have concerns, and 45% do not support it.
- Opposition for the preliminary area rate boundary is greater in individual communities that are further away from the proposed sidewalk. At least 76% of respondents from Hammonds Plains, Lower Sackville, and Middle Sackville (from within the preliminary area rate boundary) do not support it.

7. Engagement Results - Qualitative Data Analysis

This section provides a summary of feedback received through survey responses (online and in paper format for each candidate community survey), flipchart/notes paper (placed on tables at public meetings), the Q&A period at public meetings (notes taken by staff), emails, and phone calls. Feedback was analyzed by identifying key themes. Qualitative feedback was mostly consistent in all five communities, however at varying rates of occurrence. These key themes are outlined in Section 6.1. Some community specific feedback was also received and is outlined in Section 6.2.

7.1. Qualitative Feedback – All Communities

Safety; Traffic; Speeds; Road conditions

Participants expressed concerns about safety along their mainstreets and in their village cores, stating:

- high traffic volumes and speeds; and,
- uneven and narrow gravel shoulders.

Identity; Village core; Identifiable mainstreet; Economic development; Growth

Participants acknowledge that most candidate communities serve as commercial hubs for the surrounding communities and identify the benefits of sidewalks, such as:

- modernization, growth, and development of communities as an identifiable, vibrant, and connected village core;
- enhanced access to essential services, businesses, transit stops, and community hubs, for all ages and abilities;
- becoming a more desirable place to live and encouraging new people and young families to move to their communities; and,
- foster community connections, support local businesses, and contribute to the overall attractiveness of the village.

Participants also questioned who would use the sidewalks and what benefits they bring to the community, especially considering the car-oriented design of the communities/mainstreets and not enough demand for walking or cycling to justify the location, as well as:

- they do not use services in the candidate community;
- are too far away from the sidewalk location;
- are more likely to use services in other communities; and,
- the infrastructure is 'too urban' for the rural area to maintain the community's rural character.

Physical & mental health; Active lifestyles; Social connection

Participants highlighted the benefits of this infrastructure for:

- promoting a healthier and more active community;
- having safe spaces for transportation and recreational activities; and,
- creating opportunity for meeting new people and social interaction in the community.

Transportation habits

Participants who support sidewalks and are already walking or see others walking are open to alternative modes of transportation, such as biking or walking if the infrastructure were available. Other comments include:

- convenient transportation and aesthetically pleasing infrastructure;
- necessary because they are not able to drive/do not own a vehicle and need to be able to access services and transit stops; and,
- improved access to the existing trail system.

Participants who oppose sidewalks either do not perceive the benefits due to their car dependency or their lifestyle habits, such as:

- rarely or never walk (and do not see others walking) in the proposed area and do not foresee themselves using sidewalks even if they were implemented;
- only walk or bike on the existing trail system;

Services/infrastructure needs in the community

Participants in support of sidewalks believe that they are a standard municipal service seen across rural communities in Nova Scotia.

Concerns were raised that winter maintenance (and general maintenance) of the sidewalks will not be adequate; citing insufficient maintenance of the:

- existing gravel shoulders;
- roads (potholes); and,
- urban sidewalks.

Additional concerns were raised regarding the environmental impact of placing more concrete and hard surfaces into the environment, and if this would cause drainage issues on private property.

Participants not in support of sidewalks (or even those who support them, but don't seem them as a priority) provided feedback on what other municipally provided (in some rural communities the following are provincial jurisdiction, or the responsibility of private property owners) priorities their community has, including:

- bridge repairs, road upgrades/repairs, and maintaining gravel roads and ditches, snowplowing;
- accommodation for ATVs;
- sewer/wastewater service;
- professional firefighters;
- more frequent garbage pick-up;
- a more reliable bus/transit service; and,
- parks and trail upgrades, recreational facilities, and recreational programs for children and youth.

Funding mechanism; Taxation; Priorities and timing

Participants who support taxation to fund the construction/maintenance of sidewalks, do not like the proposed funding mechanism and the concept of "perpetuity", in addition to:

- mistrust and concern that this is a long commitment;
- belief that the funds will exceed the financial needs of a sidewalk in their community;
- concerns fiscal mismanagement and a lack of transparency on how the area rate revenue will be allocated and spent; and,
- do not want to put this burden on future taxpayers.

Participants feel that the area rate is too high and not reasonable. They expressed concerns about their ability to afford additional taxes, considering the high cost of living (housing costs, groceries, utilities, and fuel etc.), inflation, increased property valuations, and other financial pressures due to limited/fixed/low household income.

Timing and priority of the sidewalk project is seen as inappropriate relative to other pressing economic concerns and community needs – such as food insecurity, healthcare/social programs, affordable housing.

Taxation cost-benefit; Perceived value for property taxes

Participants who do not support taxation to fund the construction/maintenance of sidewalks express frustration with already high property taxes, and a reluctance to support additional taxation for a project that:

- they would not personally use and/or benefit from or deemed unnecessary and frivolous, and represents an unwise use of taxpayer funds;
- consider the area rate a high cost to taxpayers to cover a high cost of infrastructure perceived to have low demand and need;
- does not correspond to improvements for priority services or infrastructure; and,
- could be funded with current taxes if they were allocated more effectively.

Only a few participants saw the tax increase as a small price to pay for long-term benefits and on-going improvements to the community.

Taxation fairness; Rural vs. urban; Demand

Participants show disagreement and frustration with HRM's approach to taxation and eligible services in urban and rural communities, stating that:

- rural residents already pay substantial property taxes, and the tax burden is not distributed fairly, especially considering the disparity in the level of services between urban and rural areas within the municipality;
- rural areas are being asked to pay the same rates as urban areas without receiving equivalent levels of service;
- rural taxes subsidize the urban tax areas; and,
- sidewalks are a basic service provided by municipal government, and a service provided to urban tax areas at no additional rate to their general tax rate, and therefore, rural taxpayers should not be subjected to additional taxation.

Area rate model; Timeline; Distribution and governance of funds

Participants suggest different options (both funding mechanism and infrastructure options) to be developed and for HRM to return to the community with these options to discuss and determine the communities' preferred option(s). General preference is for no area rate and participants ask HRM to change the finance process to include sidewalk eligibility in the existing suburban/rural general tax rates.

Participants who agree with the concept of taxation paying for investments in the community provide conditions for area rate revenue governance, such as:

- to be used for the on-going maintenance of the sidewalks, and for construction to be funded through the existing capital budget and alternative funding sources, such as federal or provincial funding or contributions from developers to reduce the area rate;
- to be less in communities further away from the sidewalk (tiered rate like Sheet Harbour);
- to only be in place until the cost of constructing the sidewalks is paid off; and,
- to only be spent in the candidate community and surrounding areas (that pay the area rate) and should not be used for other rural communities under the Rural Active Transportation program.

Some participants supporting an area rate, preferred a flat amount, not a variable stating:

- it is easier to understand the annual impact to the taxpayer; and,
- is fairer than a rate tied to property value, as the capped property program skews the market property values, and therefore property valuation does not reflect personal finances

Some participants suggest revisiting the proposal when economic conditions are more favorable for tax increases to support community investments.

Mainstreet Infrastructure improvements; Paved shoulders; Location of infrastructure

Participants supporting sidewalks asked for consideration of other locations, wither in addition to or instead of the proposed mainstreet location, such as:

- near schools or connecting neighborhoods; and,
- other communities within the area rate boundaries.

Participants mentioned that they chose the rural character of the area when they moved to these communities, and therefore do not expect sidewalks, and feel others should not expect them, stating that mainstreet improvements could be made in other ways, such as:

- paved shoulders as there is no area rate required;
- allow ATVs on the sidewalks, paved shoulders and/or trails;
- focusing on existing trails system for walking and cycling is preferred;
- better enforcement of the current speed limits;
- widen roads to allow for faster traffic flow; and,
- designated turning lanes to reduce traffic being backed up by line ups at the drive-through.

Area rate boundary; Removals; Additions

Participants expressed skepticism about the preliminary boundary size and request a more centralized focus on the candidate community, stating that:

- living farther from the proposed sidewalks means they receive no direct benefit from it;
- resource properties should be excluded as they do not generate significant traffic;
- islands should be excluded as they do not generate significant traffic to community centre; and,
- commercial properties should be the only properties included (or pay more than residential) if the infrastructure is going to be in the village core and mostly benefit these businesses.

Engagement process; Project concerns; Community planning

Participants appreciated the opportunity to provide their feedback on the project and have their voices heard but identified some aspects they were not satisfied with, such as:

- those who rent or lease should not have been asked about area rates as they do not directly pay property taxes;
- a printed version of the survey should have been included in the mailout to property owners and residents;
- public meetings in all communities identified in the preliminary area rate boundaries, not just candidate communities;
- accuracy of data collection methods, particularly the use of travel patterns by vehicles, to determine a need for walking/cycling infrastructure;
- actual scope of the construction project, the materials to be used, and how the proposed funding mechanism was determined; and
- accuracy surrounding the sidewalks costs, planning, and implementation.

Participants requested further community planning with meaningful engagement and consultation in decision-making processes, with many feeling that their voices are not being heard or considered, stating:

- existing community plans do not represent the overall community priorities; and,
- responses for past reports are low and/or they had never heard of these documents/projects before.

7.2. Qualitative Feedback - Community Specific

Porters Lake & Surrounding Area

- Sidewalks were not considered a priority for participants. Priorities listed were recreation services, crosswalks (at the Tims and school), fire services, etc.
- Although Trunk 7 was considered as a mainstreet in past community planning documents, this was not participants priority location.
- Existing sidewalk in front of the shopping plaza on Trunk 7 is sufficient.
- Participants do not feel that there has been enough engagement or participation prior to this project.
- Participants believe their taxes are not being distributed fairly by HRM and are not being reinvested into their community.

- Approximately 59% of all survey respondents who responded that they do not support sidewalks being added to a portion of Trunk 7 in Porters Lake mentioned 'tax' or 'rate' in their qualitative response. This does not mean that this was their only reason but does show that the area rate was significant enough to be included as a reason to not support the project.

Musquodoboit Harbour & Surrounding Area

- Discussions around sidewalks in Musquodoboit Harbour have been on-going for 30 years.
- Participants are only interested in approximately 2 kms (bridge-to-bridge) of sidewalk, and don't think there is a need for more than that currently.
- Participants believe they will no longer need a sidewalk once the High School moves to East Chezzetcook, especially given uncertainty of how the building would be repurposed.
- Participants would prefer a funding mechanism similar to the Sheet Harbour Model (community driven, lower/tiered rate based on distance from sidewalk) as they do not trust that all the generated revenue will be invested into the candidate community and surrounding areas.
- Participants may also be interested in an area rate related to maintenance costs.
- Approximately 68% of all survey respondents who responded that they do not support sidewalks being added to a portion of Trunk 7 in Musquodoboit Harbour mentioned 'tax' or 'rate' in their qualitative response. This does not mean that this was their only reason but does show that the area rate was significant enough to be included as a reason to not support the project.

Hubbards & Surrounding Area

- Participants do not feel that the area rate is fair but are willing to pay it for the sake of community safety.
- Participants are concerned about impacts to private property and sea level rise due to properties that are built near or into the right-of-way and the proximity of Trunk 3 to the ocean.
- Participants would prefer a funding mechanism similar to the Sheet Harbour Model (community driven, lower/tiered rate based on distance from sidewalk) as they do not trust that all the generated revenue will be invested into the candidate community and surrounding areas.
- Participants may also be interested in an area rate related to maintenance costs.
- Participants noted that the Hubbards area located in Chester Municipality do not pay an area rate for sidewalks and overall, pay less in property taxes.
- Participants from Queensland and Black Point feel that Hubbards is a good location for a sidewalk, but that they would not benefit from it and therefore should not have to pay for it. Participants from these communities may be willing to pay an area rate for sidewalks in their own communities.
- Approximately 57% of all survey respondents who responded that they do not support sidewalks being added to a portion of Trunk 3 in Hubbards mentioned 'tax' or 'rate' in their qualitative response. This does not mean that this was their only reason but does show that the area rate was significant enough to be included as a reason to not support the project.

Upper Tantallon & Surrounding Area

- Participants do not feel that there has been enough engagement or participation prior to this project.
- There are some inconsistencies in priorities between the two community centres (one on Trunk 3 and the other on Hammonds Plains Road).
 - Participants from communities and neighborhoods to the north of Upper Tantallon were heavily impacted by wildfires and their priority is egress.
 - Participants from communities and neighborhoods to the west and south of Upper Tantallon recognize the importance of egress but are more willing to support sidewalks.
- Participants suggest that HRM should wait for more development before investing in sidewalks. It is seen as a better use of taxpayer money to integrate sidewalks into Halifax water or development projects.
- Approximately 51% of all survey respondents who responded that they do not support sidewalks being added to a portion of Trunk 3 or Hammonds Plains Road in Upper Tantallon mentioned 'tax' or 'rate' in their qualitative response. This does not mean that this was their only reason but does show that the area rate was significant enough to be included as a reason to not support the project.

Lucasville & Surrounding Area

- Participants priority for Lucasville is transit. Some participants are concerned that if they receive sidewalks, they will not get transit. Others believe that they will have a better chance of getting transit if they have sidewalks.
- Participants outlined the injustices faced by Lucasville as an African Nova Scotian community including the historical lack of investment in public transportation and requested that no area rate be charged to implement the sidewalk project in their community:

"An area rate exemption for the Lucasville Greenway Project is warranted, once approved in the future. This historically African Nova Scotian (ANS) community has been (overlooked, underserved, been an afterthought or no thought at all) in municipal planning for community enhancements. These are just some of the reasons for an "area rate exemption" for the future Lucasville Greenway Project. This would be a positive forward-thinking approach for the HRM with the acknowledgement of past and current inequities in service, planning and actions in HRM ANS communities. HRM would then be in a position to take the lead on the road to reconciliation and doing the right thing in terms of governance."

- Lucasville Greenway Society

- Approximately 61% of all survey respondents who responded that they do not support sidewalks being added to a portion of Lucasville Road in Lucasville mentioned 'tax' or 'rate' in their qualitative response. This does not mean that this was their only reason but does show that the area rate was significant enough to be included as a reason to not support the project.

8. Attachment- Stakeholders' Written Submissions



Hon. Kent Smith, MLA
Eastern Shore

February 26th, 2024

HRM Active Transportation
Attn: Emma Martin

Re: Written submission in response to Porters Lake sidewalk consultation

Dear Emma,

Please accept this letter as official correspondence in response to the recent work your Team has undertaken to explore interest in new sidewalk infrastructure in the core of Porters Lake.

First and foremost, I want to thank you and your Team for the extensive work done to ensure that there was ample opportunity for Porters Lake residents to provide feedback. The additional in-person meetings, as well as extending the deadline for survey responses, showed me that you were listening - thank you. I would also like to highlight & praise the work of Katherine MacLellan & David MacIsaac. They both navigated through some very intense meetings with poise & professionalism; they deserve special recognition.

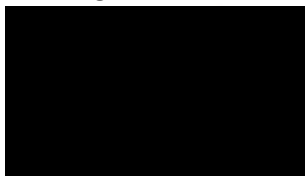
Secondly, I would like to make it abundantly clear that I intend for my advocacy to support my constituents, and the comments I heard first-hand at the four (4) Porters Lake community meetings. While I am not privy to the survey responses, the sentiments I heard at the meetings were overwhelmingly one-sided: the residents in the proposed catchment area **are not** in favour of sidewalks. Some of the specific reasons I heard were:

1. Pedestrian traffic in the core of Porters Lake is minimal, rendering sidewalks unnecessary.
2. No desire to pay additional property tax, and raising the rural general rate to align with the urban general rate is unfair. Many residents cited an inequity in available services in rural vs. urban areas of the Municipality.
3. When the province repaves the core of Porters Lake, it will include a paved shoulder, adding 1.2 meters to the width of Trunk 7. Many residents voiced their support for this option, and several reached out to me directly to ask when the core is scheduled to be repaved.

Finally, I believe it is a safe assumption that the survey responses will match the in-person feedback, and that the Staff Report on Porters Lake will conclude with a recommendation to not pursue sidewalks in this community. I would like it known to your Team, and Regional Council as a whole, that I support the residents of Porters Lake. For my part, I will work with NS Department of Public Works to prioritize repaving Trunk 7 in the core of Porters Lake. That is what I heard the residents want, so that is what I will advocate for.

I trust Harbour East Marine Drive & Regional Council will also support the Porters Lake community.

Kind regards,





Hon. Kent Smith, MLA
Eastern Shore

CC: HRM Mayor & HRM Regional Council
Mark Peachy, Chief Engineer, Nova Scotia Department of Public Works



Hon. Kent Smith, MLA
Eastern Shore

February 26th, 2024

HRM Active Transportation
Attn: Emma Martin

Re: Written submission in response to Musquodoboit Harbour sidewalk consultation

Dear Emma,

Please accept this letter as official correspondence in response to the recent work your Team has undertaken to explore interest in new sidewalk infrastructure in the core of Musquodoboit Harbour.

First and foremost, I want to thank you and your Team for the extensive work done to ensure that there was ample opportunity for Musquodoboit Harbour residents to provide feedback. The in-person meetings, as well as extending the deadline for survey responses, showed me that you were listening - thank you. I would also like to highlight & praise the work of Katherine MacLellan & David MacIsaac. They both navigated through some very intense meetings with poise & professionalism; they deserve special recognition.

Secondly, I would like to make it abundantly clear that I intend for my advocacy to support my constituents, and the comments I heard first-hand at the two (2) Musquodoboit Harbour community meetings. Since I am not privy to the survey responses, I am unsure of the trends in that feedback. The sentiments I heard first-hand at the meetings were mixed, with one unique solution that seemed to garner more support than others: Install sidewalks in Musquodoboit Harbour, but not under the current funding proposal. More specifically:

1. Sidewalks are **wanted** in Musquodoboit Harbour, but the increased property tax rate & requirement to pay in perpetuity was not broadly supported.
2. I admittedly heard *some* acceptance to pay additional property tax, but also *some* belief that raising the rural general rate to align with the urban general rate is unfair. Many residents cited an inequity in available services in rural vs. urban areas of the Municipality.
3. In perpetuity payments were explained as a funding model to ensure consideration for future sidewalks. It was clearly communicated that Musquodoboit Harbour residents are not interested in future sidewalks. The expressed interest is for approximately 2.2 kilometres of sidewalk spanning from bridge to bridge, through the core of the community.
4. Musquodoboit Harbour residents are keenly aware of the unique funding model & partnerships that brought sidewalks to Sheet Harbour in 2009, and have requested Regional Council direct staff to explore a similar approach for Musquodoboit Harbour.

I believe it is a safe assumption that the survey responses and in-person feedback will yield mixed results. The Musquodoboit Harbour community has engaged in sidewalk discussions dating back to the early 1980s, and the success of the Sheet Harbour sidewalk project has shown the community how transformational this infrastructure is. I surmise the staff report will include a recommendation to pursue sidewalks in Musquodoboit Harbour under a one-time funding partnership with other levels of government. I also personally believe residents would support redirecting & slightly increasing the existing Musquodoboit Harbour Common Area Rate to cover annual sidewalk maintenance costs.



Hon. Kent Smith, MLA
Eastern Shore

I would like it known to your Team, and Regional Council as a whole, that I support the residents of Musquodoboit Harbour. For my part, I will work with NS Department of Public Works to explore whatever funding support the Province can offer, and I will also spearhead a conversation with the local Member of Parliament, Minister Sean Fraser, to request Federal support. This is what I heard the residents say, so this is what I will advocate for.

I trust Harbour East Marine Drive & Regional Council will also support the community, and finally find a way to deliver sidewalks to Musquodoboit Harbour.

Kind regards,



CC: HRM Mayor & HRM Regional Council
Mark Peachy, Chief Engineer, Nova Scotia Department of Public Works

Attachment 3 – Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations

The calculations use taxable property values from 2024 and does not account for possible increase in taxable property values revenue as this cannot be predicted beyond 2024 values at the time of this report.

The options proposed in the Recommendation Report are analyzed in the sections below. The calculation of the area rate for each option (color coded) is illustrated with a scenario in the Recommendation Report in *Figure 7- Area Rate Options Summary* on page 18.

The calculations for East Preston (1.3 kilometers), Hubbards (1.5 kilometers), Lucasville (1.4 kilometers), and Musquodoboit Harbour (2.2 kilometers) consider number of kilometers identified as initial sidewalks in their existing community plans, functional plans, survey responses and/or engagement feedback. Estimated kilometers of sidewalk for the additional thirteen candidate communities is at 2 kilometers each, as specific estimates are not as readily available.

Calculations include all candidate communities; however, with the exception of East Preston, they have not been recommended for implementation under the AT Rural Program yet. The order used is randomized for example purposes only.

The calculations do not assume yearly maintenance, as new communities being added is not expected to occur on a yearly basis. Cumulative maintenance cost is referring therefore to costs triggered as new communities are added not year over year. As soon as all communities received initial sidewalks, cumulative maintenance will be the same until new sidewalks are added in the candidate communities.

3.1. Fixed Area Rate

Three approaches were used to consider options for a Fixed Area Rate. Once a fixed area is set, it would not fluctuate pending on the new communities added or new sidewalks added in each community beyond the initial.

a) Fixed Area Rate of \$0.021/\$100 of taxable property value tied to the total maintenance costs in four communities

This scenario calculation proposes to apply to four communities the area rate per \$100 of taxable property value needed to cover cumulative maintenance costs of **\$128,000** for four communities. *Table 1 – Area Rate Calculation of \$0.021/\$100 of Taxable Property Value* below shows the total maintenance costs as cumulative from each community newly added, and not year over year. The calculation is only assuming the initial sidewalks in each community.

Candidate community	KM planned	Maintenance costs	Taxable property value (2024)	Area rate to cover own costs
East Preston	1.3	\$26,000.00	\$72,467,700	\$0.036*
Hubbards	1.5	\$30,000.00	\$118,193,600	\$0.025
Lucasville	1.4	\$28,000.00	\$267,490,700	\$0.010
Musquodoboit Harbour	2.2	\$44,000.00	\$145,230,000	\$0.030
Totals after the four communities have initial sidewalks	6.4	\$128,000.00	\$603,382,000	\$0.021

Table 1 – Area Rate Calculation of \$0.021/\$100 of Taxable Property Value

Attachment 3 – Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations

b) Fixed Area rate – of \$0.018 per \$100 of taxable property value tied to maintenance costs in each of the seventeen communities

This scenario calculation proposes to apply to each candidate community the area rate per \$100 of taxable property value that is the median¹ area rate of the individual area rates per \$100 that cover maintenance in each of the seventeen candidate communities. *Table 2 – Variable Area Rate per \$100 of Taxable Property Value* below outlines area rate for each community to be applied to own total taxable property value to cover own total maintenance costs.

Candidate community	KM planned	Maintenance costs	Taxable property value (2024)	Area rate to cover own costs
East Preston	1.3	\$26,000.00	\$72,467,700	\$0.036*
Hubbards	1.5	\$30,000.00	\$118,193,600	\$0.025
Lucasville	1.4	\$28,000.00	\$267,490,700	\$0.010
Musquodoboit Harbour	2.2	\$44,000.00	\$145,230,000	\$0.030
Hatchet Lake/ Brookside	2	\$40,000.00	\$394,433,600	\$0.010
Hubley	2	\$40,000.00	\$352,701,600	\$0.011
Hammonds Plains/ Stillwater Lake	2	\$40,000.00	\$2,006,368,300	\$0.002
Cow Bay	2	\$40,000.00	\$158,079,800	\$0.025
Lake Echo	2	\$40,000.00	\$233,644,100	\$0.017
Middle Musquodoboit	2	\$40,000.00	\$36,123,300	\$0.111
Sambro	2	\$40,000.00	\$43,216,100	\$0.093
Wellington	2	\$40,000.00	\$222,422,500	\$0.018
Windsor Junction	2	\$40,000.00	\$235,972,600	\$0.017
Dutch Settlement	2	\$40,000.00	\$62,707,200	\$0.064
Porters Lake	2	\$40,000.00	\$513,505,800	\$0.008
Upper Tantallon	2	\$40,000.00	\$570,816,200	\$0.007
Sheet Harbour	2	\$40,000.00	\$63,737,700	\$0.063
Total	32.8	\$648,000.00	\$5,497,110,800	\$0.012

Table 2 – Variable Area Rate per \$100 of Taxable Property Value

* Although the actual area rate to cover maintenance in East Preston is estimated at \$0.036, it is capped at \$0.033 to align with the difference between urban and suburban/ rural tax rate. Median calculation is not impacted by the difference.

c) Fixed Area rate – of \$0.012 per \$100 of taxable property value tied to total maintenance costs from seventeen communities

This scenario calculation proposes to apply to each candidate community the area rate per \$100 of taxable property value needed to cover the total maintenance costs of \$648,000 for all candidate communities. *Table 2 – Variable Area Rate per \$100 of Taxable Property Value* above shows the total maintenance costs as accumulated when new communities are added. The calculation is only assuming the initial sidewalks in each community.

¹ Median can be defined as the middle number of a group of numbers ordered ascending.

Attachment 3 – Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations

3.2. Variable Area Rate

Variable Rate is calculated below. Two tables are included to show how area rate could fluctuate as new communities and/or sidewalks are added.

a) Variable Area Rate change per \$100 of taxable property value in four communities

This scenario shows area rate per \$100 of taxable property value needed to cover accumulated maintenance costs when new communities receive sidewalks applied to the accumulated total of property tax values.

The *Table 3 – Variable Area Rate Change for Four Communities* outlines changes of variable area rates per \$100 of taxable property value that would be applied as the communities of East Preston, Hubbards, Lucasville, and Musquodoboit Harbour receive sidewalks/ on-road multi-use pathways. This order is used as an example.

The example assumes only initial sidewalks being constructed in all communities. In this example, after all communities have the initial sidewalks built, the rate would not change anymore until new sidewalks are added and maintenance costs increase.

Candidate community	KM planned	Maintenance costs	Cumulative Maintenance Costs	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Variable Area Rate as a new community received a sidewalk
East Preston	1.3	\$26,000.00	\$26,000.00	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$0.033
Hubbards	1.5	\$30,000.00	\$56,000.00	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$0.029
Lucasville	1.4	\$28,000.00	\$84,000.00	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$0.018
Musquodoboit Harbour	2.2	\$44,000.00	\$128,000.00	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021
Totals after the four communities have initial sidewalks	6.4	\$128,000.00	\$128,000.00	\$603,382,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021

Table 3 – Variable Area Rate Change for Four Communities

* Although the actual area rate to cover maintenance in East Preston is estimated at \$0.036, it is capped at \$0.033 to align with the difference between urban and suburban/ rural tax rate.

b) Variable Area Rate change per \$100 of taxable property value in all seventeen candidate communities

This scenario shows the new area rate per \$100 of taxable property value needed to cover cumulative maintenance costs when new candidate communities receive sidewalks applied to the cumulative property tax values.

The *Table 4 – Variable Area Rate Change for Candidate Communities* outlines changes of variable area rates per \$100 of taxable property value that would be applied if new candidate communities are approved and receive sidewalks/ on-road multi-use pathways. This order is used as an example.

Attachment 3 – Proposed Area Rate Options Calculations

The example assumes only initial sidewalks being constructed in all communities. In this example, after all communities have the initial sidewalks built, the rate would not change anymore until new sidewalks are added and maintenance costs increase.

Candidate community	KM planned	Maintenance costs	Cumulative Maintenance Costs	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Variable Area Rate as a new community received a sidewalk
East Preston	1.3	\$26,000.00	\$26,000.00	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$0.033*
Hubbards	1.5	\$30,000.00	\$56,000.00	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$0.029
Lucasville	1.4	\$28,000.00	\$84,000.00	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$0.018
Musquodoboit Harbour	2.2	\$44,000.00	\$128,000.00	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021
Hatchet Lake/ Brookside	2	\$40,000.00	\$168,000.00	\$394,433,600	\$997,815,600	\$0.017
Hubley	2	\$40,000.00	\$208,000.00	\$352,701,600	\$1,350,517,200	\$0.015
Hammonds Plains/ Stillwater Lake	2	\$40,000.00	\$248,000.00	\$2,006,368,300	\$3,356,885,500	\$0.007
Cow Bay	2	\$40,000.00	\$288,000.00	\$158,079,800	\$3,514,965,300	\$0.008
Lake Echo	2	\$40,000.00	\$328,000.00	\$233,644,100	\$3,748,609,400	\$0.009
Middle Musquodoboit	2	\$40,000.00	\$368,000.00	\$36,123,300	\$3,784,732,700	\$0.010
Sambro	2	\$40,000.00	\$408,000.00	\$43,216,100	\$3,827,948,800	\$0.011
Wellington	2	\$40,000.00	\$448,000.00	\$222,422,500	\$4,050,371,300	\$0.011
Windsor Junction	2	\$40,000.00	\$488,000.00	\$235,972,600	\$4,286,343,900	\$0.011
Dutch Settlement	2	\$40,000.00	\$528,000.00	\$62,707,200	\$4,349,051,100	\$0.012
Porters Lake	2	\$40,000.00	\$568,000.00	\$513,505,800	\$4,862,556,900	\$0.012
Upper Tantallon	2	\$40,000.00	\$608,000.00	\$570,816,200	\$5,433,373,100	\$0.011
Sheet Harbour	2	\$40,000.00	\$648,000.00	\$63,737,700	\$5,497,110,800	\$0.012
Total after candidate communities have initial sidewalks	32.8	\$648,000.00	\$648,000.00	\$5,497,110,800	\$5,497,110,800	\$0.012

Table 4 – Variable Area Rate Change for Candidate Communities

* Although the actual area rate to cover maintenance in East Preston is estimated at \$0.036, it is capped at \$0.033 to align with the difference between urban and suburban/ rural tax rate.

Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options

Below is shown the financial impact resulted from the difference between revenue calculated using the AO 2020-008-ADM Area Rate of \$0.033 and the proposed options calculated for the prioritized communities discussed in the Recommendation Report.

The calculations use taxable property values from 2024 and does not account for possible increase in taxable property values revenue as this cannot be predicted beyond 2024 values at the time of this report.

The options proposed in the Recommendation Report are analyzed in the sections below. The calculation of the area rate for each option, using the same scenario, is shown in *Attachment 3- Proposed Area Rate Calculations* and illustrated in the Recommendation Report in *Figure 7- Area Rate Options Summary* on page 18.

The calculations for East Preston (1.3 kilometers), Hubbards (1.5 kilometers), Lucasville (1.4 kilometers), and Musquodoboit Harbour (2.2 kilometers) consider number of kilometers identified as initial sidewalks in their existing community plans, functional plans, survey responses and/or engagement feedback. Estimated kilometers of sidewalk for the additional thirteen candidate communities is at 2 kilometers each, as specific estimates are not as readily available.

Calculations include all candidate communities; however, with the exception of East Preston, they have not been recommended for implementation under the AT Rural Program yet. The order used is randomized for example purposes only.

The calculations do not represent yearly financial impact, but rather financial impact resulted as new communities are added, which is not expected to occur on a yearly basis. Cumulative revenue is referring therefore to revenue generated as new communities are added not year over year and is calculated by applying the area rate to cumulative taxable property value.

4.1. Fixed Area Rate

Fixed Area Rate is proposed using three methods. Once a fixed area is set, it would not fluctuate pending on the new communities added or new sidewalks added in each community beyond the initial.

a) Fixed Area Rate of \$0.021 tied to recovering the total maintenance costs for four communities is applied instead of AO 2020-008-ADM Area rate of \$0.033

Forgone revenue is calculated as difference between cumulative revenue at \$0.033 area rate and cumulative revenue at \$0.021 area rate.

- East Preston - financial impact: - \$8,696.12
- East Preston and Hubbards – financial impact: - \$22,879.36
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Lucasville– financial impact: \$54,978.24
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Musquodoboit Harbour- financial impact: \$72,405.84

Candidate community	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Area rate to cover own costs	Cumulative revenue at \$0.033*	Cumulative Revenue at \$0.021*	Forgone Revenue
East Preston	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$0.036	\$23,914.34	\$15,218.22	\$8,696.12
Hubbards	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$0.025	\$62,918.23	\$40,038.87	\$22,879.36
Lucasville	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$0.010	\$151,190.16	\$96,211.92	\$54,978.24
Musquodoboit Harbour	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.030	\$199,116.06	\$126,710.22	\$72,405.84
Total all four communities	\$603,382,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021	\$199,116.06	\$126,710.22	\$72,405.84

Table 1 – Financial Impact from choosing a Fixed Area Rate of \$0.021per \$100 taxable value

*All area rates are calculated per \$100 of taxable property value

b) Fixed Area rate of \$0.018 representing the median area rate is applied instead of AO 2020-008-ADM Area rate of \$0.033

Forgone revenue is calculated as difference between cumulative revenue at \$0.033 area rate and cumulative revenue at \$0.018 area rate.

- East Preston only- financial impact: \$10,870.16
- East Preston and Hubbards - financial impact: \$28,599.20
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Lucasville – financial impact: \$68,722.80
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Musquodoboit Harbour- financial impact: \$90,507.30

Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options

Candidate community	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Cumulative revenue at \$0.033*	Cumulative Revenue at \$0.018*	Forgone revenue
East Preston	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$23,914.34	\$13,044.19	\$10,870.16
Hubbards	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$62,918.23	\$34,319.03	\$28,599.20
Lucasville	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$151,190.16	\$82,467.36	\$68,722.80
Musquodoboit Harbour	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$199,116.06	\$108,608.76	\$90,507.30
Hatchet Lake/ Brookside	\$394,433,600	\$997,815,600	\$329,279.15	\$179,606.81	\$149,672.34
Hubley	\$352,701,600	\$1,350,517,200	\$445,670.68	\$243,093.10	\$202,577.58
Hammonds Plains/ Stillwater Lake	\$2,006,368,300	\$3,356,885,500	\$1,107,772.22	\$604,239.39	\$503,532.83
Cow Bay	\$158,079,800	\$3,514,965,300	\$1,159,938.55	\$632,693.75	\$527,244.80
Lake Echo	\$233,644,100	\$4,319,425,600	\$1,425,410.45	\$777,496.61	\$647,913.84
Middle Musquodoboit	\$36,123,300	\$4,355,548,900	\$1,437,331.14	\$783,998.80	\$653,332.34
Sambro	\$43,216,100	\$4,398,765,000	\$1,451,592.45	\$791,777.70	\$659,814.75
Wellington	\$222,422,500	\$4,621,187,500	\$1,524,991.88	\$831,813.75	\$693,178.13
Windsor Junction	\$235,972,600	\$4,857,160,100	\$1,602,862.83	\$874,288.82	\$728,574.02
Dutch Settlement	\$62,707,200	\$5,433,373,100	\$1,793,013.12	\$978,007.16	\$815,005.97
Porters Lake	\$513,505,800	\$5,370,665,900	\$1,772,319.75	\$966,719.86	\$805,599.89
Upper Tantallon	\$570,816,200	\$4,085,781,500	\$1,348,307.90	\$735,440.67	\$612,867.23
Sheet Harbour	\$63,737,700	\$5,497,110,800	\$1,814,046.56	\$989,479.94	\$824,566.62
Total	\$5,497,110,800	\$5,497,110,800	\$1,814,046.56	\$989,479.94	\$824,566.62

Table 2 – Financial Impact from choosing a Fixed Area Rate of \$0.018

*All area rates are calculated per \$100 of taxable property value

c) Fixed Area rate – of \$0.012 tied to total maintenance costs from all candidate communities is applied instead of AO 2020-008-ADM Area rate of \$0.033

Forgone revenue is calculated as difference between cumulative revenue at \$0.033 area rate and cumulative revenue at \$0.012 area rate.

Candidate community	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Cumulative revenue at \$0.033*	Cumulative Revenue at \$0.012*	Forgone Revenue
East Preston	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$23,914.34	\$8,696.12	\$15,218.22
Hubbards	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$62,918.23	\$22,879.36	\$40,038.87
Lucasville	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$151,190.16	\$54,978.24	\$96,211.92
Musquodoboit Harbour	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$199,116.06	\$72,405.84	\$126,710.22
Hatchet Lake/ Brookside	\$394,433,600	\$997,815,600	\$329,279.15	\$119,737.87	\$209,541.28
Hubley	\$352,701,600	\$1,350,517,200	\$445,670.68	\$162,062.06	\$283,608.61
Hammonds Plains/ Stillwater Lake	\$2,006,368,300	\$3,356,885,500	\$1,107,772.22	\$402,826.26	\$704,945.96
Cow Bay	\$158,079,800	\$3,514,965,300	\$1,159,938.55	\$421,795.84	\$738,142.71
Lake Echo	\$233,644,100	\$4,319,425,600	\$1,425,410.45	\$449,833.13	\$787,207.97
Middle Musquodoboit	\$36,123,300	\$4,355,548,900	\$1,437,331.14	\$454,167.92	\$794,793.87
Sambro	\$43,216,100	\$4,398,765,000	\$1,451,592.45	\$459,353.86	\$803,869.25
Wellington	\$222,422,500	\$4,621,187,500	\$1,524,991.88	\$486,044.56	\$850,577.97
Windsor Junction	\$235,972,600	\$4,857,160,100	\$1,602,862.83	\$514,361.27	\$900,132.22

Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options

Dutch Settlement	\$62,707,200	\$5,433,373,100	\$1,793,013.12	\$521,886.13	\$913,300.73
Porters Lake	\$513,505,800	\$5,370,665,900	\$1,772,319.75	\$583,506.83	\$1,021,136.95
Upper Tantallon	\$570,816,200	\$4,085,781,500	\$1,348,307.90	\$652,004.77	\$1,141,008.35
Sheet Harbour	\$63,737,700	\$5,497,110,800	\$1,814,046.56	\$659,653.30	\$1,154,393.27
Total	\$5,497,110,800	\$5,497,110,800	\$1,814,046.56	\$659,653.30	\$1,154,393.27

**All area rates are calculated per \$100 of taxable property value*

4.2. Variable Area Rate is applied instead of AO 2020-008-ADM Area rate of \$0.033

Forgone revenue is calculated as difference between cumulative revenue at \$0.033 area rate and cumulative revenue at variable area rate for four communities.

a) Variable Area Rate for four communities

- East Preston only - no financial impact
- East Preston and Hubbards – financial impact: \$6,918.23
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Lucasville –financial impact: \$67,190.16
- East, Preston, Hubbards, Lucasville, and Musquodoboit Harbour – financial impact: \$71,116.06

Candidate community	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Variable Area Rate Option*	Cumulative revenue at \$0.033*	Cumulative Revenue at Variable Area Rate	Forgone Revenue
East Preston	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$0.033	\$23,914.34	\$23,914.34	\$0.00
Hubbards	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$0.029	\$62,918.23	\$56,000.00	\$6,918.23
Lucasville	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$0.018	\$151,190.16	\$84,000.00	\$67,190.16
Musquodoboit Harbour	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021	\$199,116.06	\$128,000.00	\$71,116.06
Total four Communities	\$603,382,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021	\$199,116.06	\$128,000.00	\$71,116.06

Table 3 – Financial Impact from choosing a Variable Maintenance Area Rate in Four Communities

**All area rates are calculated per \$100 of taxable property value*

b) Variable Area Rate for Four Communities

Forgone revenue is calculated as difference between cumulative revenue at \$0.033 area rate and cumulative revenue at variable area rate for four communities.

- East Preston only - no financial impact
- East Preston and Hubbards – financial impact: \$6,918.23
- East, Preston, Hubbards, and Lucasville –financial impact: \$67,190.16
- East, Preston, Hubbards, Lucasville, and Musquodoboit Harbour – financial impact: \$71,116.06

Candidate community	Taxable property value (2024)	Cumulative taxable property value	Variable Area Rate Option*	Cumulative revenue at \$0.033*	Cumulative Revenue at Variable Area Rate	Forgone Revenue
East Preston	\$72,467,700	\$72,467,700	\$0.033	\$23,914.34	\$23,914.34	\$0.00
Hubbards	\$118,193,600	\$190,661,300	\$0.029	\$62,918.23	\$56,000.00	\$6,918.23
Lucasville	\$267,490,700	\$458,152,000	\$0.018	\$151,190.16	\$84,000.00	\$67,190.16
Musquodoboit Harbour	\$145,230,000	\$603,382,000	\$0.021	\$199,116.06	\$128,000.00	\$71,116.06
Hatchet Lake/ Brookside	\$394,433,600	\$997,815,600	\$0.017	\$329,279.15	\$168,000.00	\$161,279.15
Hubley	\$352,701,600	\$1,350,517,200	\$0.015	\$445,670.68	\$208,000.00	\$237,670.68
Hammonds Plains/ Stillwater Lake	\$2,006,368,300	\$3,356,885,500	\$0.007	\$1,107,772.22	\$248,000.00	\$859,772.22
Cow Bay	\$158,079,800	\$3,514,965,300	\$0.008	\$1,159,938.55	\$288,000.00	\$871,938.55
Lake Echo	\$233,644,100	\$3,748,609,400	\$0.009	\$1,237,041.10	\$328,000.00	\$909,041.10
Middle Musquodoboit	\$36,123,300	\$3,784,732,700	\$0.010	\$1,248,961.79	\$368,000.00	\$880,961.79

Attachment 4 – Financial Implications from Proposed Area Rate Options

Sambro	\$43,216,100	\$3,827,948,800	\$0.011	\$1,263,223.10	\$408,000.00	\$855,223.10
Wellington	\$222,422,500	\$4,050,371,300	\$0.011	\$1,336,622.53	\$448,000.00	\$888,622.53
Windsor Junction	\$235,972,600	\$4,286,343,900	\$0.011	\$1,414,493.49	\$488,000.00	\$926,493.49
Dutch Settlement	\$62,707,200	\$4,349,051,100	\$0.012	\$1,435,186.86	\$528,000.00	\$907,186.86
Porters Lake	\$513,505,800	\$4,862,556,900	\$0.012	\$1,604,643.78	\$568,000.00	\$1,036,643.78
Upper Tantallon	\$570,816,200	\$5,433,373,100	\$0.011	\$1,793,013.12	\$608,000.00	\$1,185,013.12
Sheet Harbour	\$63,737,700	\$5,497,110,800	\$0.012	\$1,814,046.56	\$648,000.00	\$1,166,046.56
Total	\$5,497,110,800	\$5,497,110,800	\$0.012	\$1,814,046.56	\$648,000.00	\$1,166,046.56

Table 4 – Financial Impact from choosing a Variable Maintenance Area Rate in Candidate Communities

*All area rates are calculated per \$100 of taxable property value