



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 15.3.1
Halifax Regional Council
November 18, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Cathy Deagle Gammon, Chair, North West Community Council

DATE: November 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Hubbards Rural Sidewalks Area Rate and Boundary

ORIGIN

November 10, 2025 meeting of North West Community Council, Item 14.1.2.

RECOMMENDATION

The North West Community Council recommends that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the community boundary of Hubbards, as shown in Attachment 1 of the staff report dated September 10, 2025, for an area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value, to be charged after substantial completion of the AT facility, consistent with the process outlined in Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, the Rural Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order.
2. Pending approval of the area rate in Hubbards:
 - a. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to explore external funding opportunities with other orders of government to support the active transportation facilities in Hubbards; and
 - b. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or their designate, to negotiate and enter into one or more agreements, and any amendments to those agreements, with the Province of Nova Scotia respecting the construction, operation, and maintenance of AT facilities in the provincial right-of way.

BACKGROUND

North West Community Council received a staff recommendation report dated September 10, 2025 and presentation to consider a new area rate to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/on-road multi-use pathways (AT facilities) on St Margaret's Bay Road (Trunk 3) and proposed area rate boundary.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated September 10, 2025.

DISCUSSION

North West Community Council considered the staff report dated September 10, 2025 and presentation approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated September 10, 2025.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated September 10, 2025.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the North West Community Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Community Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Community Council are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated September 10, 2025.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated September 10, 2025.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated September 10, 2025.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated September 10, 2025.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part 1, Clause 25(c) and (d):
The powers and duties of a community council include:

...

(c) recommending to the Council appropriate by-laws, regulations, controls and development standards for the community;

(d) recommending to the Council appropriate user charges for different parts of the community;

Administrative Order 48, *Respecting the Creation of Community Councils*, section 3A North West Community Council:

...

(2) Section 29 of the Charter respecting area rates applies to the North West Community Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated September 10, 2025.

Report Prepared by: Krista Vining, Team Lead, Legislative Assistants, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.223.1046

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 14.1.2
North West Community Council
November 10, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of North West Community Council
FROM: Jacqueline Hamilton, Acting Commissioner of Operations
DATE: September 10, 2025
SUBJECT: Hubbards Rural Sidewalks Area Rate and Boundary

ORIGIN

May 13, 2025, Halifax Regional Council Item 15.1.1:

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Young

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to:
[.] 3. return to North West Community Council with a recommendation on area rate and an area rate boundary for the community of Hubbards.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes community engagement results (Attachment 3) related to a new area rate to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/on-road multi-use pathways (AT facilities) on St Margaret's Bay Rd. (Trunk 3) and provides rationale for the proposed area rate boundary.

Halifax Regional Council approved the Rural Active Transportation Program in February 2022 to support the development of sidewalks and on-road multi-use pathways in rural community centres and adopted an area rate to make prioritized rural communities eligible for the infrastructure. The implementation of the area rate is directed by [Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, the Rural Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order](#) (AO 2022-008-ADM)¹. On July 8, 2025 the area rate was set at \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value to be applied to all residential, resource, and commercial properties in approved communities in the fiscal year following substantial completion of the infrastructure.

Hubbards scored highly on the Rural AT Program criteria approved by Regional Council and was prioritized for AT facilities along Trunk 3.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

¹ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2022-008-adm_0.pdf

On May 13, 2025, Regional Council directed staff to begin functional planning in Hubbards to determine the location, requirements, and feasibility of the infrastructure, and to return to the North West Community Council for approval of the area rate and boundary.

Staff followed direction outlined in [AO 2022-008-ADM](#): a preliminary boundary for the area rate was set to be the community boundaries of Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point considering traffic counts, school catchment boundary and concentration and use of amenities located on Trunk 3 in Hubbards. Extensive and diverse community engagement included Interest holder groups, property owners, and residents within this boundary to determine their views on support for the AT facilities, area rate and boundary.

Survey responses within the Hubbards community boundary (excluding Queensland and Black Point) showed strong support. From 160 responses:

- **81% responded “I support” (some with concerns) sidewalks being added on Trunk 3 in Hubbards”**
- **65% responded “I support” (some with concerns) adding an area rate to make Hubbards eligible for AT facilities**
- **62% responded “I support” (some with concerns) the preliminary area rate boundary.**

However, survey results from the preliminary area rate boundary (Hubbards, Queensland and Blackpoint), show neither strong opposition nor strong support towards the components of the project. From the 271 survey responses received:

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

There is no strong evidence and no support from the community engagement to conclude that Queensland and Black Point should be included in the proposed area boundary as outlined in the discussion section of this report.

Therefore, the proposed area rate boundary associated with this report is the community boundary of Hubbards, as shown in Attachment 1.

Financial impact from recommending this project in Hubbards is significant, ranging from \$1.5M-\$3M/km. Construction of the infrastructure is not expected until at least 2028 and will require cost-sharing with other levels of government. Formal Council support would also be needed to support grant applications. The area rate from Hubbards is expected to cover maintenance costs of the infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that North West Community Council recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the community boundary of Hubbards, as shown in Attachment 1 of this report, for an area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value, to be charged after substantial completion of the AT facility, consistent with the process outlined in Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, the *Rural Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order*.
2. Pending approval of the area rate in Hubbards:
 - a. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to explore external funding opportunities with other orders of government to support the active transportation facilities in Hubbards; and
 - b. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or their designate, to negotiate and enter into one or more agreements, and any amendments to those agreements, with the Province of Nova Scotia respecting the construction, operation, and maintenance of AT facilities in the provincial right-of way.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Council approved the Rural Active Transportation (AT) Program on [February 8, 2022](#)² that outlined the approach for building and maintaining AT facilities in rural community centres. This program followed recommendations from the [Active Transportation Priorities Plan](#)³ and the [Integrated Mobility Plan](#)⁴.

The mechanism to ensure tax rate consistency related to the eligibility for sidewalk services between urban and rural tax zones involves the application of an area rate to rural communities. The process to implement the area rate is outlined in [Administrative Order 2022-008-ADM, the Rural Sidewalk Area Rates Administrative Order](#) (AO 2022-008-ADM)⁵ which Regional Council approved in February 2023 and amended on [July 8, 2025](#)⁶. The new area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value is applied to all residential, resource, and commercial properties within each community approved for a sidewalk/on-road multi-use pathway in the fiscal year following substantial completion of the AT Facility.

A list of 17 new Candidate Rural Communities and the updated map of Candidate Rural Communities and Spines were approved by Regional Council on [February 7, 2023](#). Council also approved evaluation criteria to prioritize five communities to receive infrastructure in their community centre by 2032, such as: being a rural growth centre in the Municipality's Regional Plan, population density, safety, equity, municipal plans, community planning and advocacy, and number of local or regional destinations.

The Hubbards Community Plan (2022)⁷ 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 2024. 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..."⁸

Hubbards scored well on the evaluation criteria and was prioritized and further assessed for implementation of an area rate to fund new AT facilities on St Margaret's Bay Rd (Trunk 3). St Margaret's Bay Rails-to Trail, is an AT facility not included in the area rate discussion as it is already being funded from the general rate.

Regional Council provided direction on [May 13, 2025](#)⁹ to start functional planning in Hubbards to determine locations of AT facilities, requirements and also to return to the North West Community Council to approve the area rate boundary.

DISCUSSION

Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Community Engagement

The [AO 2022-008-ADM](#) provides the process to follow before making a recommendation to Community Council on the application of an area rate to a boundary for new AT facilities in rural communities. The two key steps are: setting a preliminary boundary for the area rate and engaging property owners and residents within that boundary to determine their views on the area rate and boundary.

Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point were included in the preliminary community area rate boundary following evaluations of travel patterns, school catchment boundaries, and concentration and use of community amenities (e.g., large grocery stores, regional public services). The criteria and how they were considered are described below.

² <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220208rc1554.pdf>

³ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/at_plan_final_july222014_000.pdf

⁴ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/IMP_report_171220-WEB.pdf

⁵ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/2022-008-adm_0.pdf

⁶ <https://pub-halifax.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=2502>

⁷ <https://onehubbards.org/sites/default/files/210103-HubbardsCommunityPlan-FINAL.pdf>

⁸ <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240806rc1531.pdf>

⁹ <https://pub-halifax.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=1908>

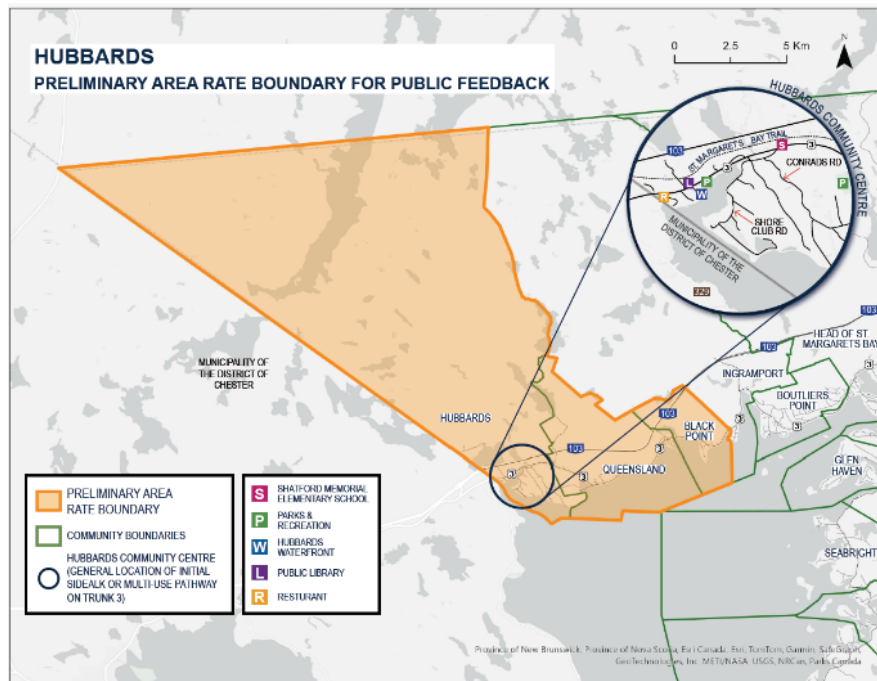


Figure 1- Preliminary Area Rate Boundary

Travel Patterns

This criterion is intended to help understand traffic generated in the area and whether communities in the preliminary area boundary access Hubbards, could benefit from the new AT facilities and/or generate the need for new AT facilities.

Average number of trips per day, by motor vehicle, originating from rural and suburban dissemination areas where the trip travels along St Maragaret's Bay Rd past 10309 St Margaret's Bay Rd in Hubbards were collected from the "Streetlight Insight Platform" data system and are mapped in Attachment 2.

Based on this data more than 70% of vehicles on Trunk 3 in Hubbards originated in Hubbards, Queensland, Black Point, and Ingramport. The data is collected at dissemination area (DA) level¹⁰ and does not align with the community boundaries.

- Hubbards and Queensland: 40% of traffic.
- Queensland, Black Point and Ingramport: 30% of traffic.
- Hubbards (low density area), Ingramport (low density area), Black Point (low density area), Upper Tantallon (high density area): 11% of traffic
- Others in HRM: 19% (each separate DA no more than 4%)

This data shows that significant traffic is originating outside Hubbards.

When looking at population over 18 years old¹¹(see Table 1 below) and properties registered, as provided by HRM Finance, Queensland's population is similar to Hubbards' and double that of Black Point and Ingramport. Although there is no strong evidence, it could be inferred that Queensland is likely to generate some traffic within the Hubbards/Queensland dissemination area, and more traffic than Black Point and Ingramport within the Queensland/Black Point/Ingramport dissemination area.

¹⁰ A dissemination area (DA) is a small, relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent dissemination blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 persons based on data from the previous Census of Population Program. It is the smallest standard geographic area for which all census data are disseminated.

¹¹ Source: Statistics Canada (2021), ESRI Data Enrichment (2023), EnviroNics

Community Boundary	Population (18+)	#Registered Properties
Hubbards	502	673
Queensland	445	519
Black Point	200	226
Ingramport	221	187
Totals	1147	1418

Table 1- 2021 Statistics Data per Community Boundaries

School Catchment Boundaries

Shatford Memorial Elementary School services all three communities in the preliminary area boundary¹². As per the school’s website, 115 students were enrolled in 2025-2026¹³. However, due to privacy, there is no data available to show where they live. Children attending this P-6 school would be 5–11 years old.

As per 2021 Census Population by Age by Dissemination Area (DA)¹⁴ shown in Figure 2 below, in the two DAs generating the most traffic there were 45 aged 0-4 years old, and 60 aged 5-9 years old. The DA including Queensland, Black Point and Ingramport represented 62.5% of total 0-14 years old, 66% of total 0-4 years old and 66% of total 5-9 years old. Ingramport is not included in the school catchment boundary for the elementary school; therefore, it was not included in the preliminary area boundary.

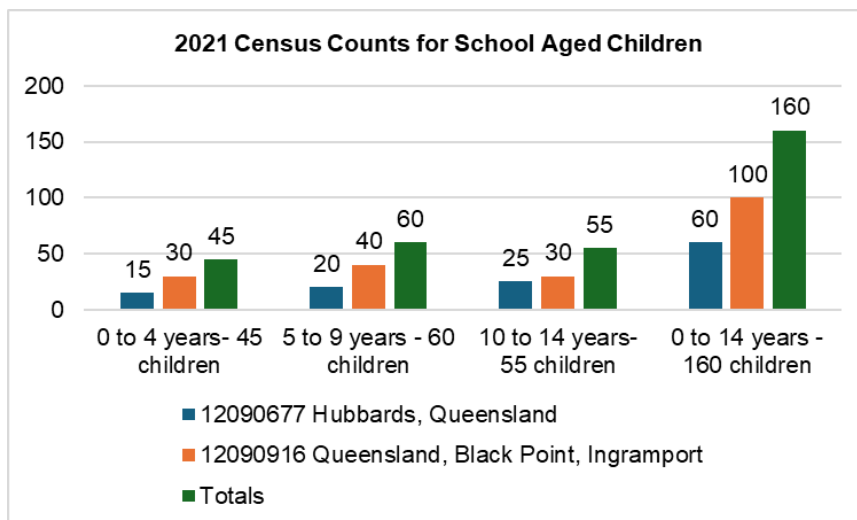


Figure 2- 2021 Population of school aged children

We can infer that there are more children living in areas outside Hubbards who attend the school in Hubbards. However, there is no strong data to suggest that this area generates more daily traffic from school drop-offs and pick-ups because children living 1.6km or more would benefit from school busing and Queensland is at more than 1.6km away from the school. This supports the public survey’s responses where only 17% mentioned daily trips to school/day care/work from Queensland and only 3% from Black Point.

Children from both dissemination areas will benefit from having AT facilities connecting their school to amenities in Hubbards (e.g Library)

¹² <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/cycling-walking/hubbardsschoolcatchmentboundarymap.pdf>

¹³ <https://sme.hrce.ca/sites/default/files/2025-09/class%20lists.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://data-hrm.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/census-2021-population-age-range/explore>

Concentration and Use of Community Amenities

Hubbards is located administratively within two municipalities - Halifax Regional Municipality and Chester; however, there is seamless transition within the community along St Margaret's Bay Rd. Concentration of amenities span along St Margaret's Bay Rd from the Hubbards Shopping Centre (includes hardware store, grocery store, liquor store) within the Chester side of the community boundary to the Hubbards Landing near Queensland. Along the street, there are restaurants, a public library, Hubbards Waterfront, farmers market, Shatford Memorial Elementary School, museums, wellness centres, pet grooming, rails to trails, etc. Very few community services/businesses are located in Queensland and Black Point to meet daily needs, so these two communities could benefit from Hubbards' amenities.

There are already sidewalks within the Chester area and some along the Hubbards Landing near Queensland (about 150m). A complete network would enhance the village's character and move away from the thoroughfare highway look/feel. Safety and accessibility of those living in the area will improve as they could access all amenities by walking/cycling on safe AT facilities, as opposed to deteriorated and narrow shoulders.

Existing community planning and engagement through the Hubbards Community Plan (2022)¹⁵, identified the village centre/mainstreet, amenities they are interested in connecting (including in Queensland) and outlined public's preliminary interest in sidewalks and bike facilities during the process.

Community Engagement Results

In winter and early spring of 2024, staff conducted community engagement (detailed in Attachment 3) in the preliminary area rate boundary (Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point). The main components considered during this engagement were the level of community support for implementation of sidewalks/ on-road multi-use pathways on St Margaret's Bay Rd, the area rate and the preliminary area rate boundary.

Overall, 81% of survey respondents own/co-own a primary home in the preliminary area rate community boundary: Hubbards at 73.12%; Queensland at 91.37% and Black Point at 92.45%.

Survey response and meeting attendance rates from the Hubbards' preliminary boundary were comparable to those in the other prioritized candidate communities in the Rural AT Program¹⁶. More participation was recorded from Hubbards (160 survey responses and 75 attendees to public meetings) than Queensland (58 responses and 28 attendees) and Black Point (53 participants and 17 attendees).

Hubbards Preliminary Area Boundary	Population (18+)	Registered Properties	Meeting Attendees	Survey Responses
	1147	1418	134 ¹⁷	271 ¹⁸
Survey response rate	32.7%	28.5%		
Meeting attendance rate	11.7%	9.44%		

Table 2- Representation from Hubbards

In the preliminary area rate boundary, results show neither strong opposition nor strong support towards the components of the project.

From the 271 survey responses received from the preliminary area rate boundary:

- 65% support (some with concerns) sidewalks/ on-road MUPs being added to Trunk 3 in Hubbards;
- 48% do not support and 48% support (some with concerns) the area rate; and,
- 47% do not support and 44% support (some with concerns) the preliminary area rate boundary proposed.

¹⁵ [https://onehubbards.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/What%20We%20Heard%20-%20Hubbards%20Community%20Plan\(1\).pdf](https://onehubbards.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/What%20We%20Heard%20-%20Hubbards%20Community%20Plan(1).pdf)

¹⁶ <https://pub-halifax.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=1908>

¹⁷ 14 of 134 meeting attendees were not from Hubbards Preliminary Area Boundary but could own property in the area;

¹⁸ One survey response did not mention a community they live/owned/rented - not included

In the Hubbards community boundary only, support (some with concerns) for AT facilities is 81%, for the area rate is 65%, and for the preliminary area rate boundary is 62%. When comparing to the other prioritized communities, Hubbards' responses were the most supportive of the AT facilities and area rate.

As noted above, staff received 271 survey responses in the Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary: 160 from Hubbards, 58 from Queensland and 53 from Black Point through the online and on paper survey.

- Overall responses from the three communities show that 44% were supportive and 21% were supportive but had concerns.
- Hubbards community only: out of 160 responses, the most common from Hubbards was "I support" (98 responses) and 81% overall were supportive or supportive with some concerns.
- Queensland: out of 58 responses, the most common response was "I do not support" (26 responses); however, 50% overall were supportive or supportive with some concerns.
- Black Point: out of 53 responses, the most common response was "I do not support" (30 responses); only 34% were supportive or supportive with some concerns.

Those supporting these AT facilities understand the benefits they could bring to Hubbards: safety, accessibility and mobility, sense of rural identity and a connected village, potential economic development and growth. They also understand the benefits to the people living in the community and those traveling to it: improved physical and mental health as a result of an active lifestyle and social connection. Some expressed frustration with policies and decisions to extend vehicle lanes without pedestrian facilities and feel overlooked in their request for this infrastructure since the 1980s.

Concerns raised included: emergency vehicle access during and after construction due to road narrowing, loss of rural identity through urbanization, impacts to personal property and privacy due to construction, loss of property to accommodate space for sidewalks, environmental impacts (materials, coastal erosion), and appropriate maintenance service after construction.

Respondents opposing AT facilities outlined other priorities (homelessness, healthcare, education, road safety- reducing speed limits), their car dependency to access services, and identified the rails to trails traversing their community and other pathways as meeting their requirements for safe spaces to recreate and lead an active lifestyle. Some living in Queensland and Black Point stated they are more likely to travel to Upper Tantallon to meet regular needs. Skepticism was present about the scope creep of the project—from a simple sidewalk to a full beautification plan when referring to the Community Plan. Responses showed frustration among those living in Queensland and Black Point relative to the narrow scope of the project limited to Trunk 3 in Hubbards only and not extending into their communities as well.

At the time of the public engagement the area rate established by AO 2022-008 ADM was \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value.

In relation to the area rate, based on the survey responses received from the Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary, the following indicates the level of support:

- Overall: 32.6% were supportive and 15.56% were supportive but had concerns.
- Hubbards: most common response was "I support" (71 responses); 65% were supportive or supportive with some concerns
- Queensland: most common response was "I do not support" (38 responses); only 33.34% were supportive or supportive with some concerns
- Black Point: most common response was "I do not support" (42 responses); only 17% were supportive or supportive with some concerns.

Participants who support taxation to fund AT facilities are willing to pay a modest area tax rate to make them a reality and ensure long-term maintenance. They framed the cost as "reasonable", "worth every

penny”, “fair model,” to achieve the benefits that would “outweigh the financial cost”. Respondents called for consistent investment across municipal boundaries and frustration over past neglect.

Mistrust and concern were expressed by some related to lack of clarity and transparency around the capital expenditures and long-term financial planning for this project, shifting burden unfairly onto rural residents, and that funds raised would eventually exceed the project costs. Some would prefer a one-time fixed-fee capital expense rather than a perpetual tax.

Equity, fairness, and access were also a concern. There was strong opposition to paying for infrastructure in Hubbards that is perceived to not serve Queensland and Black Point residents and might not serve even locals in Hubbards, just tourists. Many live on private roads and already pay for their maintenance, not covered by taxes. Tax policy difference between the two municipalities administering Hubbards was questioned as Chester did not charge extra funds for the sidewalk built on their side. Rising living costs, to which taxes contribute, would drive out lower-income families and make the area unaffordable.

Tax affordability was also a reason for not supporting the area rate, especially for those with limited/low income/ or fixed income.

When considering the preliminary area rate boundary, most survey respondents and in-person meeting attendees did not support extending the area rate boundary beyond the Hubbards community boundary:

- From all three communities (271 responses), 31% were supportive and 13% were supportive but had concerns
- Hubbards community only: out of 160 responses, most common response was “I support” (71 responses) and 62% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.
- Queensland: out of 58 responses, most common response was “I do not support” (38 responses); only 26% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.
- Black Point: out of 53 responses, the most common response was “I do not support” (46 responses); only 9.4% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.

Respondents supporting the preliminary area rate boundary agreed that the selected area includes the highest concentration of residents who live in or access services and amenities in Hubbards and who would benefit the most from this project. Some respondents would also support this boundary if it were backed up by studies to determine these are the predominate users of this infrastructure and/or would receive the most direct benefit.

A significant number of respondents from Queensland and Black Point questioned the area rate boundary and were strongly opposed to it, expressing frustration with HRM planning to raise taxes in a region geographically and functionally disconnected from the project and with minimal return for their communities. Concerns were raised about possible community tensions due to unequal distribution of benefits and financial burden.

Rationale to Support Recommendations

Proposed Area Rate and Area Rate Boundary

The AO 2022-008-ADM establishes that area rate would be applied to all property types in the area boundary approved by Council in the year following substantial construction of the infrastructure proposed.

Following the criteria evaluated above we can conclude that:

- Community members within Queensland and Black Point strongly oppose being included in the proposed Area Rate Boundary, especially if there are no prospects for their community to receive AT facilities.
- Traffic generated in Hubbards primarily originates outside of the Hubbards community, however there is no strong evidence to demonstrate whether Queensland and/or Black Point generate the same traffic as Hubbards.

- School catchment boundary for Shatford Memorial Elementary includes the communities of Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point, however most children outside Hubbards would be bussed as they live more than 1.6 km from the school. School children would benefit from AT facilities on St Margaret's Bay Rd connecting their school to the library, parks, trails, etc.
- Although Hubbards is recognized as a community hub for its services/amenities/destinations by all three communities, survey responses show that residents living in Queensland and Black Point do not typically use amenities in Hubbards, with less than 20% of respondents from each community indicating using any of the amenities listed as options (see additional detail in Attachment 3).

Based on the above, it is proposed that the boundary for the area rate corresponds to the community boundary of Hubbards only, as already established (see map in Attachment 1). In the future, if the project scope in Hubbards includes sections in Queensland (e.g. Hubbards Recreation Centre is in Queensland and could benefit from a connection to the project in Hubbards), then this community boundary could be added to the program.

Community engagement was conducted when the area rate was \$0.033 per \$100 taxable property value and 81% of respondents to the survey in the Hubbards community boundary supported it (some with concerns). The new area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property was established by Regional Council on July 8, 2025. It is expected that this change would lessen the concerns expressed and potentially increase support for sidewalks and area rate charge.

Cost Sharing and Agreements with Other Levels of Government

Nova Scotia Department of Public Works (NSDPW) manages almost all transportation infrastructure outside of the urban core but does not maintain sidewalks or other AT facilities. Maintenance agreements between HRM and NSDPW across the municipality address case-specific maintenance needs.

When determining construction timelines in Hubbards, the provincial paving program would be considered, if possible, to benefit from project integration and cost savings between orders of government.

NSDPW is open to working with municipalities on traffic calming, AT implementation, and pilot projects. The Province of Nova Scotia is in process of releasing an Active Transportation strategy that could support the planning/design/construction of AT facilities in Hubbards.

The Regional Council Report "Rural Active Transportation Program" from [February 8, 2022](#)¹⁹ outlines in its Attachment 6 a number of programs the Municipality could apply for to fund/ cost- share this project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications related to the recommendations in this report are relatively modest. They include expenses and staff time for initiating functional planning and 30% design in Hubbards. These costs would be included in the Active Transportation capital account CR200001. The approved 2025/2026 budget includes funding for planning and designing rural AT facilities.

However, the financial implication of constructing these AT facilities in Hubbards is significant (a rural sidewalk/MUP is estimated at \$1.5M-\$3M/km). Initial construction and the eventual recapitalization costs would be borne from general tax revenue with a potential increase to the current annual budget in the active transportation capital plan and funding that would need to be secured from other orders of government.

Construction of the infrastructure would likely take place after 2028. This is due to the time required for planning and design and limited construction budget.

Considering the 2025 property values and the area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property values, as provided by HRM Taxation group, revenue raised in the Hubbards community boundary towards the

¹⁹ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220208rc1554.pdf>

maintenance of the corridor (approximate 1.5 km estimated for the priority segment within the Community Plan) would have been \$26,159. The inflation applied to both property value caps (if present) or property valuation increases would account for increases in time in maintenance costs (currently estimated around \$20,000/km). The area rate would only be charged in the year following completion, not earlier than 2029.

Hubbards Community Boundary	Taxable property value (2025)	Revenue at \$0.021*
	\$124,565,350	\$26,159

Table3- Estimated Area Rate Revenue at 2025 property values

Also, considering the 2025 property values, the average taxable value of a single-family household in Hubbards is \$353,400. As a result, the tax bill implication at an area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 taxable property value is \$74.21. As property values rise, this implication will increase as construction is not expected until 2028.

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.

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** occurred between October 2023 and May 2024 with online/in-person meetings with informal presentations and consultations about project components, existing planning and impacts to the community.
2. **Notifications** of public engagement to property owners and residents included in the preliminary area rate boundary, were provided two weeks prior to in-person public engagement and included:
 - addressed notification letters (1,037 delivered to all registered properties in the Preliminary Area Rate Boundary);
 - location targeted Facebook advertisements and posts by staff; public service announcements on electronic boards; and posts in social media by local community groups/ Facebook groups;
3. **Public engagement** between February 25 and April 15, 2024 provided inclusive opportunities to access information and provide feedback, such as:
 - in-person public meetings (134 attendees to public meetings from the three 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 building.
 - project information posted on the Halifax.ca and Halifax Shape Your City engagement platform²⁰ (over 900 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; and,
 - designated staff email and phone to collect feedback promoted in all materials distributed to the public.

²⁰ <https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/rural-active-transportation>

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, help HRM meet the mode share targets outlined in the Regional Plan and the 2018 Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP)²¹, and increase rural community safety priorities identified in the 2024 Road Safety Strategy.²²

ALTERNATIVES

That North West Community Council:

1. recommend that Halifax Regional Council include within the area rate boundary any one or both communities of Queensland and Black Point. This is not recommended based on the results of the community engagement outlined in the report;
2. refuse to recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the community boundary of Hubbards, as shown in Attachment 1 of this report, for an area rate of \$0.021 per \$100 of taxable property value.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order Number 2022-008-ADM Respecting the Implementation of Area Rates to Fund Sidewalks Outside of the Urban Tax Area in the Halifax Regional Municipality

Establishment of Community Area Rate Boundary

10. An area rate boundary shall be established for each sidewalk that will encompass the community boundary of the candidate rural community receiving the sidewalk and neighbouring communities deemed to benefit from the implementation of the sidewalk.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, 2008 SNS, c 39:

- 73 The Municipality may enter into and carry out agreements
 - (a) for highway construction, improvement and maintenance and other purposes pursuant to the Public Highways Act,
- 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 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.

²¹ https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/IMP_report_171220-WEB.pdf

²² <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/streets-sidewalks/attachment-1-road-safety-strategy.pdf>

322 (1) Council may design, lay out, open, expand, construct, maintain, improve, alter, repair, light, water, clean, and clear streets in the Municipality...

(3) The Council may expend funds for the purpose of clearing snow and ice from the streets, sidewalks and public places in all, or part, of the Municipality.

Public Highways Act, 1989 RSNS, c 371:

28 (1) A municipality shall not affect improvements of a permanent character on any highway, unless it

(a) submits to the Minister plans, specifications, estimates and other particulars respecting the proposed improvements,

(b) satisfies the Minister that suitable provision will be made for the future maintenance of such highway after it has been so improved; and

(c) obtains the Minister's written consent.

(2) The municipality may, after compliance with the conditions set out in subsection (1), enter into an agreement with the Minister for the carrying out of such improvement by the municipality, the Minister or some other person upon such terms and subject to such conditions as the Minister prescribes and the Governor in Council approves.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Proposed Hubbards Area Rate Boundary

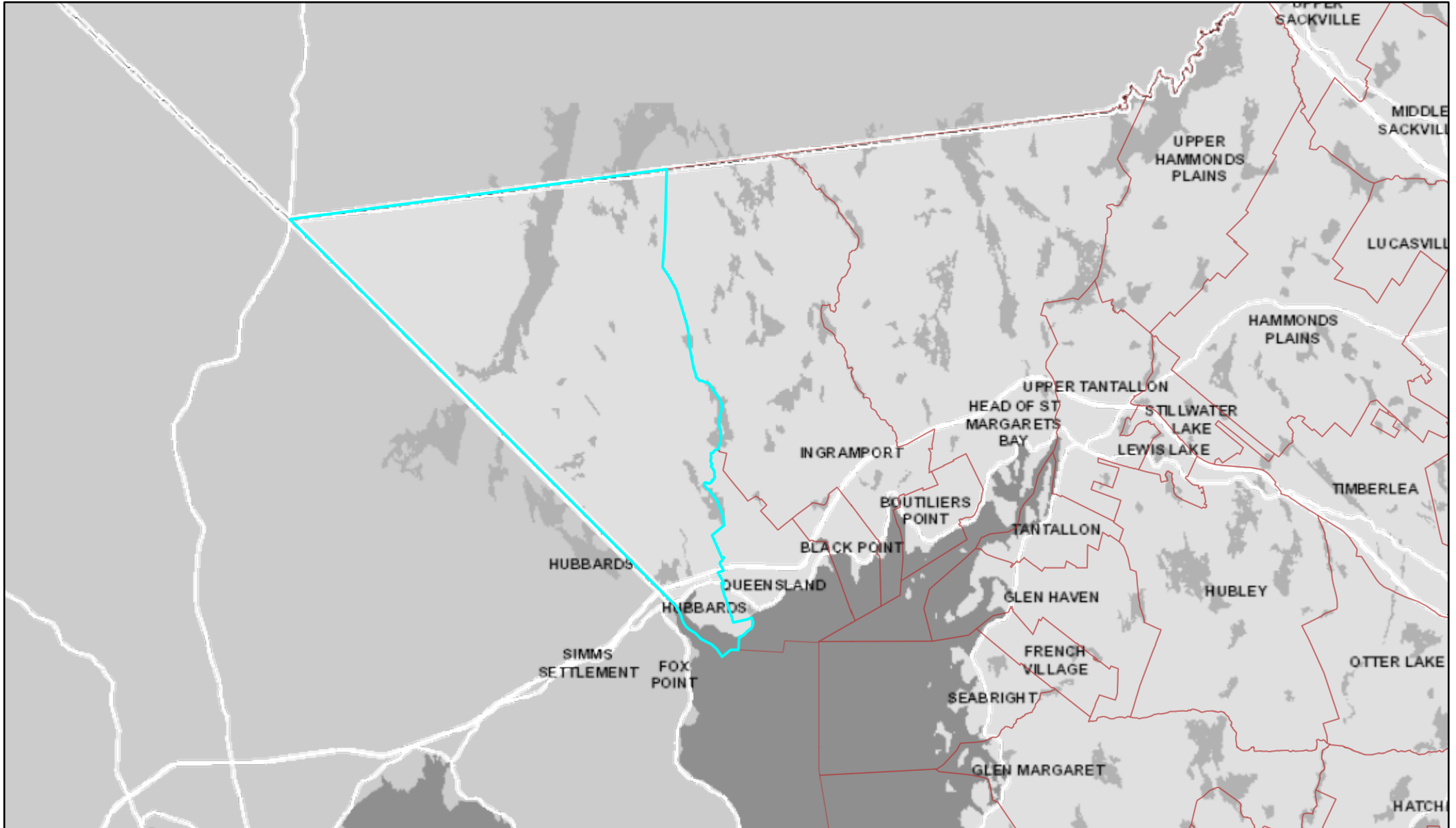
Attachment 2- Traffic Data St Margaret's Bay Rd Hubbards

Attachment 3 - What We Heard Report

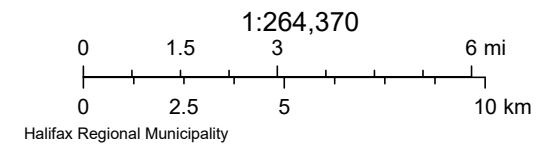
Report Prepared by: Emma Martin, AT Community Programs Coordinator

902-499-6742

Attachment 1- Proposed Hubbards Area Rate Boundary



 Community Boundaries  Hubbards Community Boundary



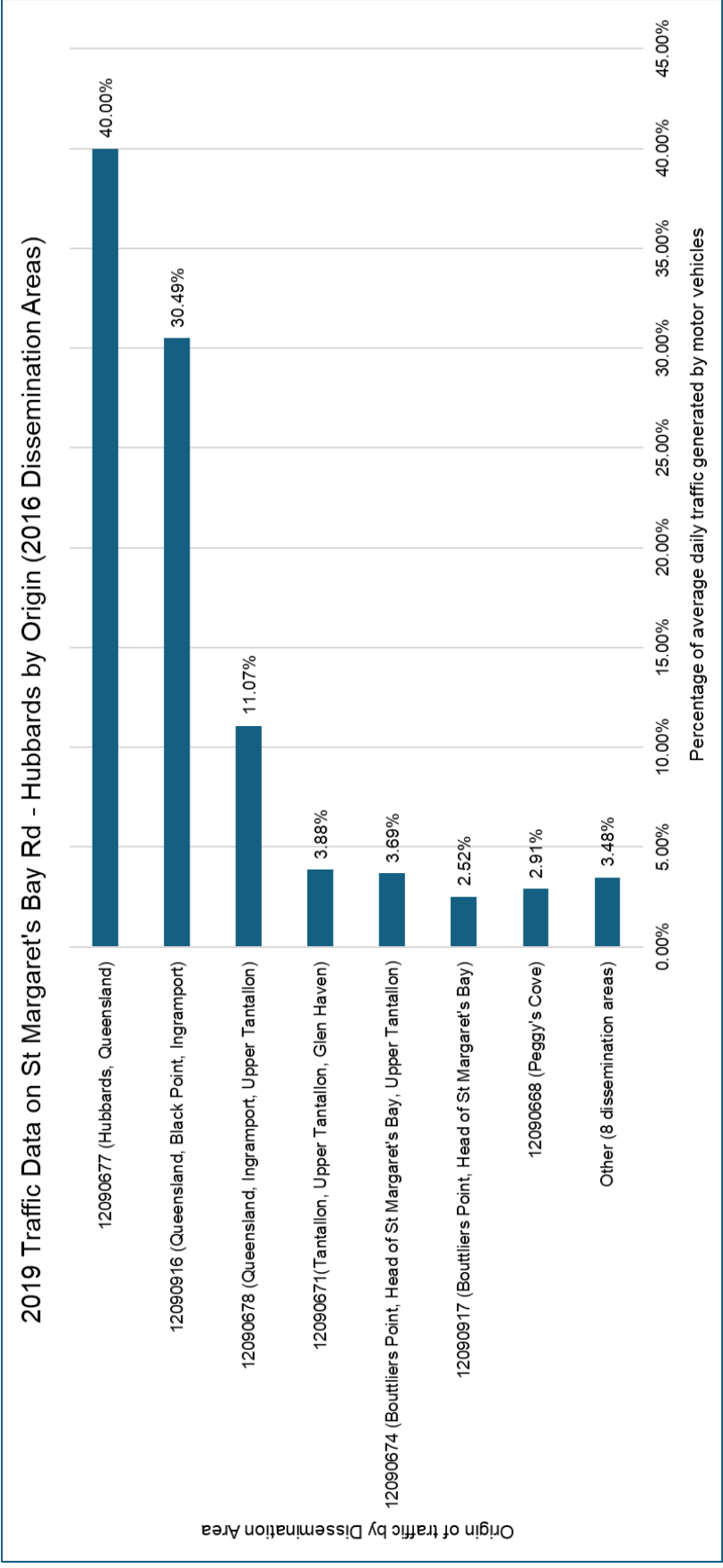


Figure 2- 2019 Traffic Originated in Dissemination Areas from Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Boundary.

Attachment 3- What We Heard Report

Area Rate for Sidewalks/ Multi-use Pathways in Hubbards Community Centre

Prepared by:

Emma Martin
HRM - Public Works
August 29, 2025



Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2

1. Introduction..... 3

2. Engagement Implementation..... 4

3. Engagement Results - Quantitative Data Analysis..... 6

 3.1. Public Opinion for new sidewalks/MUPs in Hubbards 6

 3.2. Public Support for the addition of an area rate to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/ MUP 7

 3.3. Public support for the preliminary area rate boundary to include Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point 7

 3.4. Location/ connection to the Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary .. 8

 3.5. Traffic generated by usage of St Margaret’s Bay Rd to access amenities in Hubbards as per survey responses 9

4. Engagement Results - Qualitative Data Analysis 11

 4.1. Public Opinion for new AT Facilities in Hubbards.....11

 4.2. Public Support for the addition of an area rate to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/ MUP13

 4.3. Public support for the preliminary area rate boundary to include Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point14

2. Engagement Implementation

Engagement meetings and correspondence with Hubbards Streetscape Project Committee (HSPC) and District 13 Regional Councilor Pam Lovelace occurred between October 2023 and May 2024. The HSPC has a history of advocating for sidewalks and/or active transportation in Hubbards 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/ on-road multi-use pathways (AT Facilities) 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.

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. 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, and Halifax Shape your City⁸

Notification		Hubbards
# notification letters delivered ⁴ in each preliminary area rate boundary		1,037
Location targeted advertisements	# clicks	1,617
	# reaches ⁵	30,553
	# impressions ⁶	129,048
Facebook posts	# comments	102
	# shares	27
	# reactions	91
# visitors ⁷ to Shape Your City webpage		923

Table 1 – Public Notification methods

Public engagement in Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Boundary occurred February 25 - April 15, 2024. The engagement methods, as outlined in Table 2 below considered opportunities for the public to access information and provide feedback on the project.

Engagement method		Hubbards
In -person public meetings March 4, 2024 and March 25, 2024	# meetings	4
	# participants	134
# online survey ⁹ received		208
Paper survey	# distributed	64
	# received	326
# emails with feedback		5
# phone calls with feedback		5

Table 2 – Engagement participation

⁴ Delivered: The total letters sent minus letters returned due to undeveloped land, inaccurate address, or unknown.

⁵ Reaches: The number of Facebook and Instagram accounts that saw the ads at least once.

⁶ Impressions: An impression is counted as the number of times an instance of an ad is on screen for the first time.

⁷ Visitors: Approximate number of initial webpage visits from unique IP addresses.

⁸ <https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/rural-active-transportation>

⁹ See [Halifax Shape Your City Webpage](#) for the printed survey version (same as online survey) for each candidate community.

The population (18+ only)¹⁰ and the number of registered properties¹¹ were calculated within the preliminary area rate boundary, to show if public meeting attendance and survey responses from each of these communities was proportionate and representative of their potential participation.

Community within Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Boundary	Population (18+)	#Registered Properties	#Meeting Attendees	#Survey Responses
Hubbards	502	673	75	160
Queensland	445	519	28	58
Black Point	200	226	17	53
Other Communities/Unknown	-	-	14	-
Totals	1147	1418	134	271

Table 3: Hubbards meeting attendance and survey response relevance.

¹⁰ Source: Statistics Canada (2021), ESRI Data Enrichment (2023), Environics

¹¹ Source: HRM ESRI Database (2023)

3. Engagement Results - Quantitative Data Analysis

This section analyzes responses from the online and paper surveys received. Throughout this section, “the project” refers to the implementation of sidewalks/ MUPs in Hubbards. 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/ on-road multi-use pathways (AT Facilities) 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?

3.1. Public Opinion for new sidewalks/MUPs in Hubbards

HRM staff received 271 responses in Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary: 160 from Hubbards, 58 from Queensland and 53 from Black Point through the online and on paper survey.

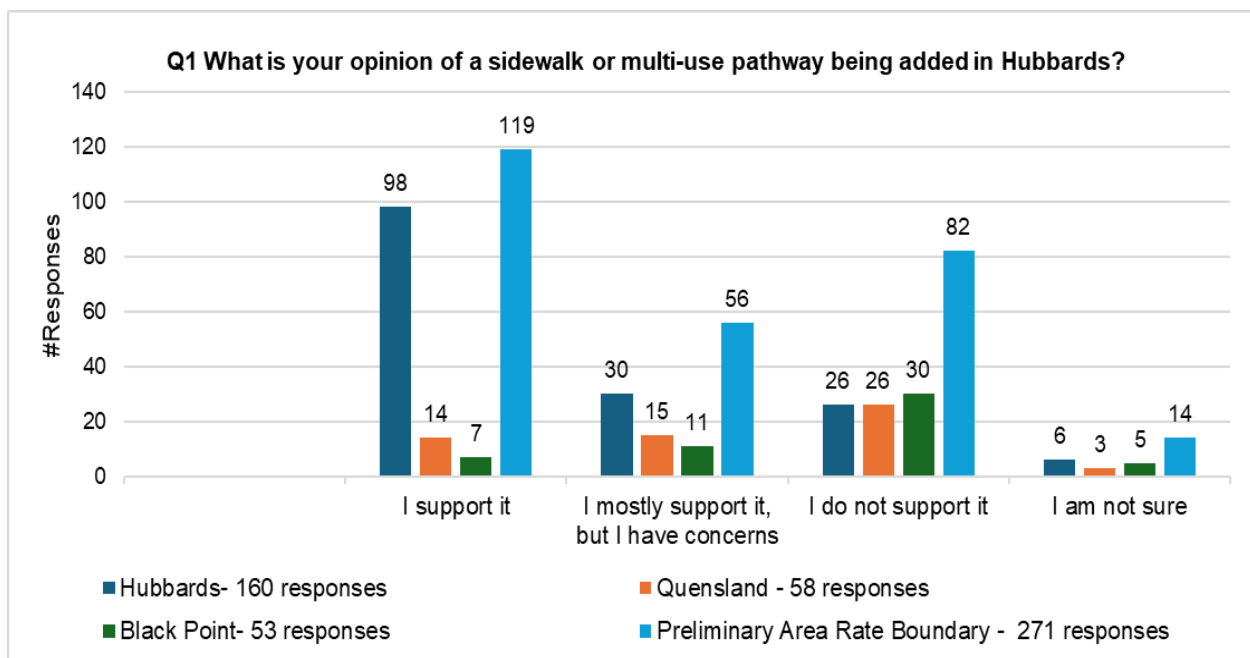


Chart 1- Support for AT facilities in Hubbards

- Overall responses from the three communities show that 44% were supportive and 21% were supportive but had concerns.
- Hubbards community only: out of 160 answers, most common answer in Hubbards was “**I support**” (98 answers) and 81% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.
- Queensland: out of 58 answers, most common answer was “**I do not support**” (26 answers); however, 50% supported or mostly supportive with some concerns.
- Black Point: out of 53 answers, most common answer was “**I do not support**” (30 answers); only 34% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.

3.2. Public Support for the addition of an area rate to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/ MUP

At the time of the public engagement the area rate established by the AO 2022-008 ADM was \$0.033 per \$100 of taxable property value.

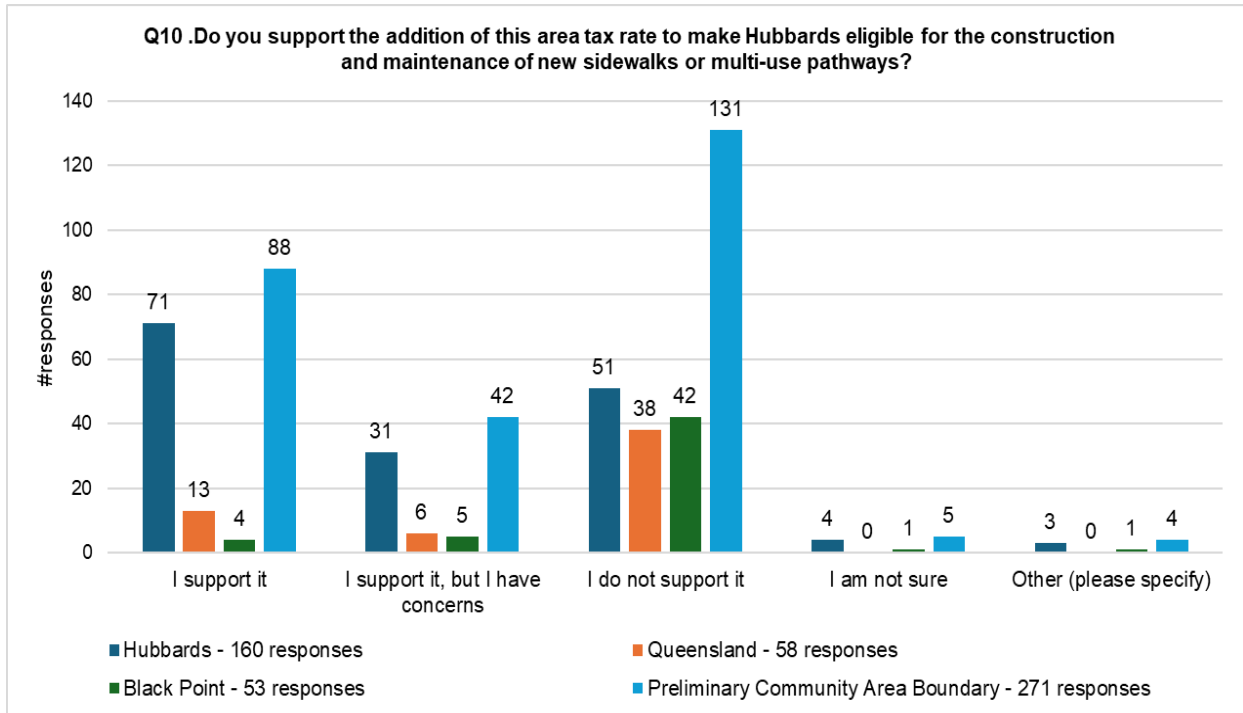


Chart 2- Public opinion regarding addition of an area rate to property bills in Hubbards

HRM staff received 270 responses in Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary: 160 from Hubbards, 57 from Queensland and 53 from Black Point.

- Overall responses from the three communities show that 32.6% were supportive and 15.56% were supportive but had concerns.
- Hubbards community only: out of 160 answers, most common answer in Hubbards was “**I support**” (71 answers) and 65% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.
- Queensland: out of 57 answers, most common answer was “**I do not support**” (38 answers); only 33.34% supported or mostly supportive with some concerns
- Black Point: out of 53 answers, most common answer was “**I do not support**” (42 answers); only 17% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.

3.3. Public support for the preliminary area rate boundary to include Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point

HRM received 271 responses from Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary: 160 from Hubbards, 57 from Queensland and 53 from Black Point.

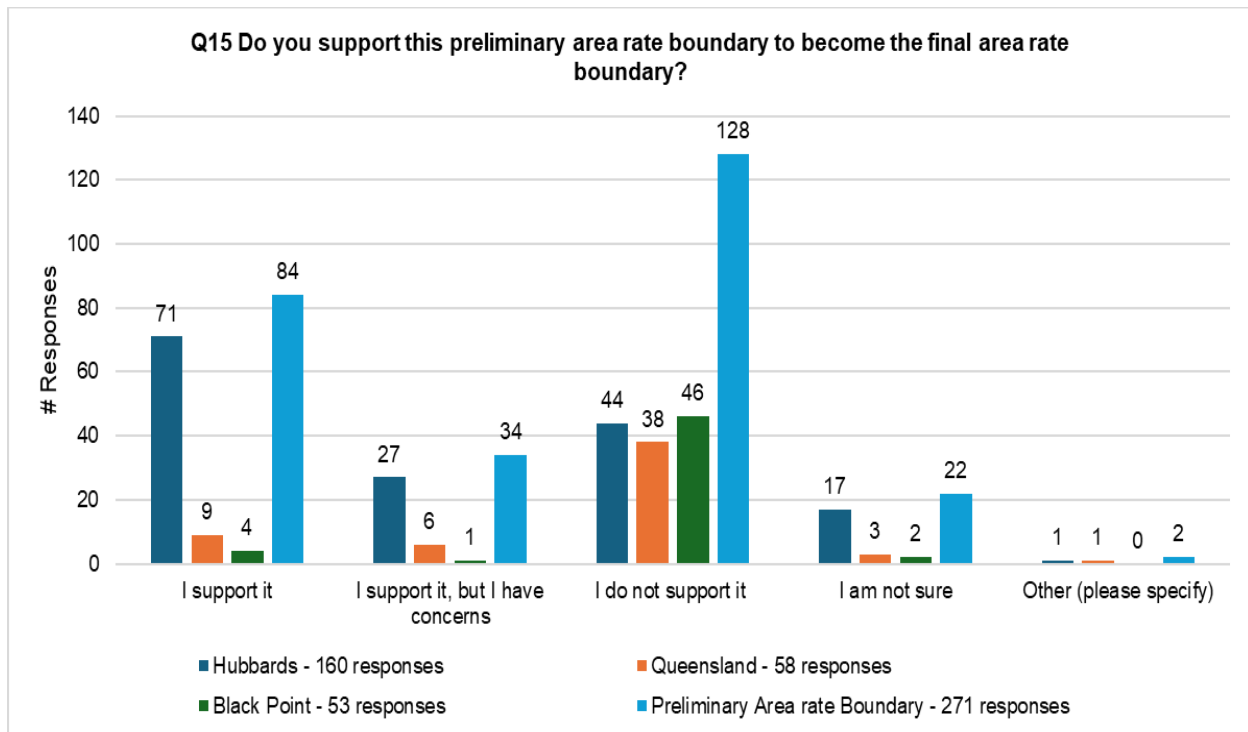


Chart 3- Public opinion regarding preliminary area rate boundary for Hubbards

- 31% were supportive and 13% were supportive but had concerns
- Hubbards community only: out of 160 answers, most common answer in Hubbards was **“I support”** (71 answers) and 62% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.
- Queensland: out of 57 answers, most common answer was **“I do not support”** (38 answers); only 26.31% supported or mostly supportive with some concerns
- Black Point: out of 53 answers, most common answer was **“I do not support”** (46 answers); only 9.4% were supportive or mostly supportive with some concerns.

3.4. Location/ connection to the Hubbards Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary

Overall, out of 271 respondents from all areas, 81% own/co-own a primary home in the Preliminary Area Rate Community Boundary.

- Hubbards community only: out of 160 respondents, 73.12% own/ co-own the primary residence in the region
- Queensland: out of 58 respondents, 91.37% own/co-own primary residence in the region
- Black Point: out of 53 respondents, 92.45% own/ co-own primary residence in the region

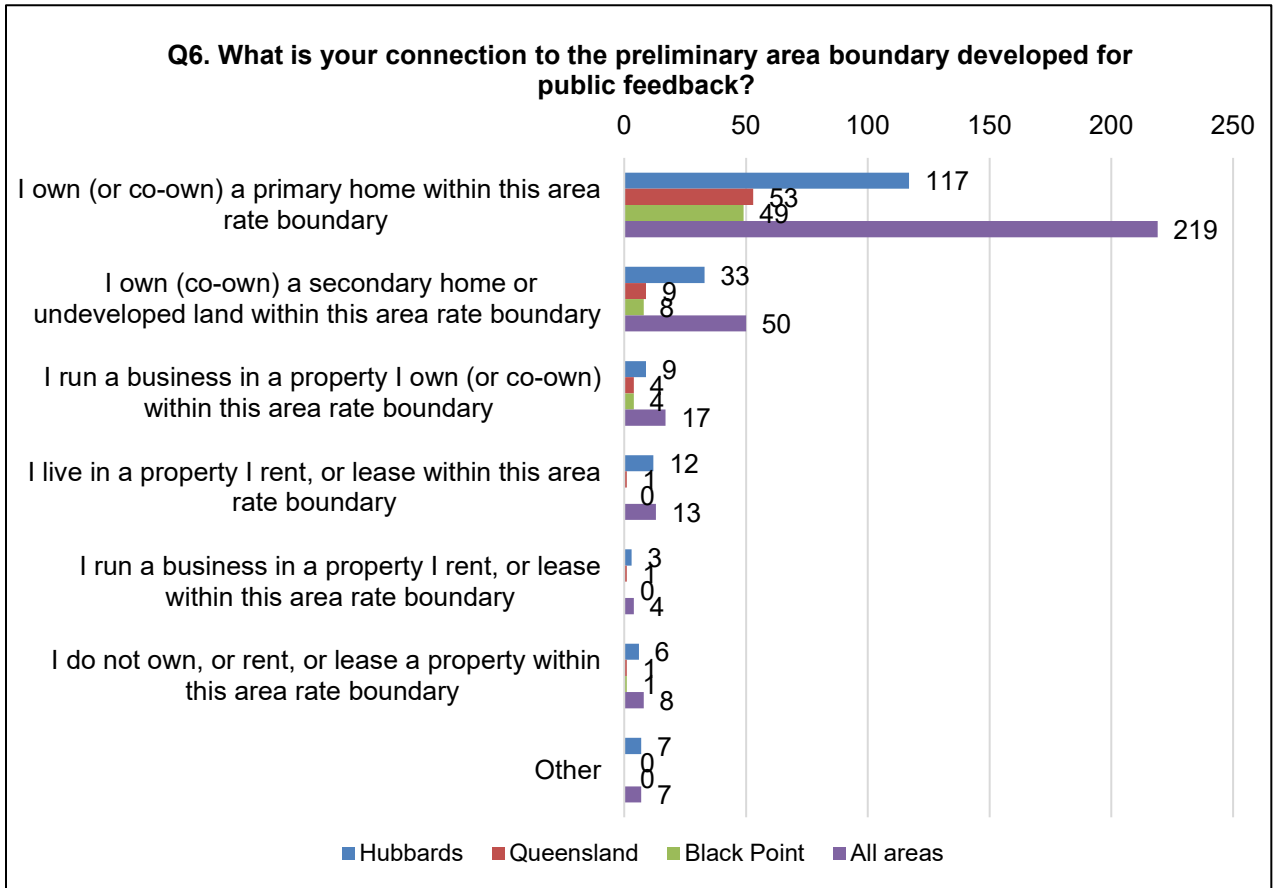


Chart 4- Respondents' connection to Preliminary Area Rate Boundary for Hubbards

3.5. Traffic generated by usage of St Margaret's Bay Rd to access amenities in Hubbards as per survey responses

This question was “mark all that apply” type. As a result, one respondent could be using the road for multiple uses. Results show that many respondents use multiple types of destinations in Hubbards. Most respondents, from all survey responses, use commercial/retail spaces in Hubbards.

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.

As expected, Hubbards generates the most traffic on the road, followed by Queensland and then Black Point:

- All three communities (79% of all respondents) use the road primarily to access commercial places (e.g. pharmacy, groceries, post office, retail store, gas station). Hubbards account for 65% of this traffic, Queensland accounts for 21% and Black Point for 14%.
- Although 66% of respondents use the road to access services (e.g. library, community centre, hospital, medical clinic, church), and 66% use it to recreate in this community (e.g. parks, trails, community events, cafes, restaurants, vacation in a secondary property), Hubbards account for 73% in both situations, followed by Queensland (18%) and Black Point (9%).
- Although 56% of respondents use the road to visit family and friends, Hubbards accounts for 79%.

- Only 17% out of 96 respondents who use the road daily to access work/ daycares/ schools are from Queensland and only 3% are from Black Point. The majority (80.2%) are from Hubbards.
- 13% responded 'other' 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.

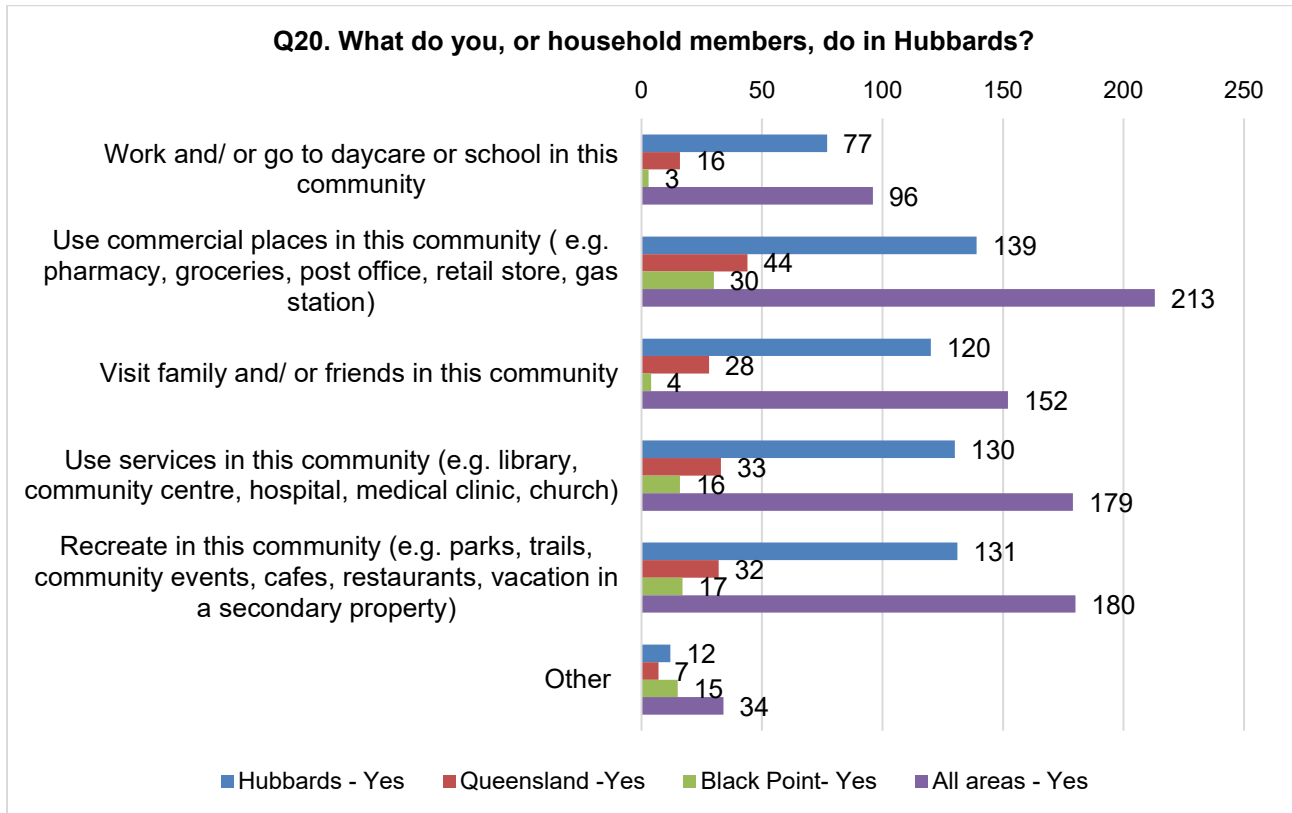


Chart 5- Activities generating traffic in Hubbards

4. 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.

Public in the region acknowledge that Hubbards serves as a commercial hub for the surrounding communities and that sidewalks in Hubbards could improve pedestrian safety, especially for school children and library users, environmental goals, promote wellness and reduce strain on healthcare. Those in Queensland and Black Point would prefer extension of plans into their communities as well. Queensland and Black Point residents who responded felt excluded from the benefits but included in the financial burden. Frustration was prominent in responses because this benefit still comes at an added cost to locals. Some opposing would be more likely to support if the benefit was direct, visible, and distributed fairly.

4.1. Public Opinion for new AT Facilities in Hubbards

Feedback analyzed is presented below by identifying key themes related to support/ concerns/ opposition for sidewalks/ MUPs in Hubbards and neighbouring communities.

Safety, Accessibility and Mobility; Traffic; Speeds; Road conditions on St Margaret's Bay Rd and also Shore Club Rd

Those supporting sidewalks outlined why sidewalks are needed: year -round local high traffic volumes and speeds increased seasonally during tourism season, uneven and narrow gravel shoulders not appropriate for the vulnerable population(children and families accessing amenities; seniors, pet walkers); near misses and constant stress navigating the shoulders are common experiences.

Those who did not consider sidewalks/ MUPs as a priority, outlined their concerns and observations: limited space for emergency vehicle passage with new infrastructure; foot traffic occurs seasonally and on weekends, primarily tied to tourism and events; locals are car-dependent when accessing amenities; sidewalks would increase tension between drivers and cyclists.

Community connections, rural Identity and lifestyle, Economic development and growth

Opinions are split between those who associate sidewalks with rural development and those who associate them with urbanization and loss of character and lifestyle. Some are concerned that many advocates for the project are not local residents or from within HRM.

Those supporting the sidewalks have a walkable vision for Hubbards and identified that a lack of sidewalks makes the community feel fragmented; they outlined the social benefits associated: unify a community, connect them to destinations, provide a sense of pride and village character; those in Quesnland would enjoy driving to Hubbards and then walk on a safe infrastructure to enjoy the place(farmers market, Shore Club and beach), similar to Lunenburg and Annapolis Royal.

Respondents recognized Hubbards as the gateway to South Shore and its potential for economic growth through boosting visitors experience and proving them a safe and welcoming place to walk and explore the community and accessing shops and restaurants. Presence of sidewalks would increase livability and support development and reduce their traffic impact. Concern was raised about municipal boundaries limiting sidewalk continuity and a business shift from the impact of development near Exit 6 that could draw attention away from the town's traditional "Main Street."

Those concerned and those not supporting the sidewalks, expressed concerns that construction may disrupt daily life, eliminate essential street parking, require land expropriation- municipality's right to use 33 feet from the road centerline—potentially impacting personal spaces, yards, driveways, wells, privacy, and enjoyment of property. There is no clarity related to compensation for affected homeowners. As per their observations, there is a long history of walking safely on shoulders or roadside without incident. They also identified other priorities relative to the development of school grounds and other underdeveloped/ rundown areas.

Physical & mental health, active lifestyles, and social connection

Respondents supporting sidewalks expressed the benefits to building sidewalks in Hubbards: they would promote year – round walking, running, support and active lifestyle, improved overall community health. They want safer ability to walk to amenities, participate in Halloween, having independent children walking/ cycling on their own, increase non- car mobility and reduce emissions.

However, some also identify that active lifestyle benefits can be achieved by the Rails-to-trails paths that already run through the community, offering walkability without needing more construction. Some emphasized the need to preserving existing informal footpaths and trails, especially connections between the recreation centre and Conrads Road, and the beach areas.

Travel & Service Patterns

Community members, especially those outside Hubbards, state that they more commonly travel to Upper Tantallon, Halifax, or Costco for their regular needs, not Hubbards.

Services/infrastructure needs/ environmental impact 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 long -term maintenance) of the sidewalks will not be adequate; citing insufficient maintenance of the: existing gravel shoulders; roads (potholes); and existent 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 were concerned about 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.

Despite paying Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) tax rates, residents claim they receive few municipal services—no sidewalk infrastructure, poor road conditions, limited garbage pickup, inadequate snow removal.

Participants from Queensland and Black Point feel that Hubbards is a good location for a sidewalk, but that they would not benefit from it as a service and therefore should not have to pay for it.

Alternative solutions that would be supported by those opposing to sidewalks: improve road shoulders for safer walking, enhance enforcement of speed limits and consider provincial solutions like photo radar; invest in existing infrastructure like Rails to Trails rather than duplicating efforts.

Planning & Scope; Priorities and timing

Those supporting sidewalks expressed frustration with policy and decisions to expand car lanes without pedestrian space and feel overlooked in their request for this infrastructure since the 1980s. Respondents expressed interest in becoming involved with the planning of such infrastructure and incorporate all of

Hubbards and Queensland Beach. Raised sidewalks are preferred over widened shoulders, which may worsen speeding and should consider in design the seasonal spikes in population and road use.

Concerns and opposition were related to the current plan's potential to increase risky crossings and disrupt traffic and transparency, realistic financial planning, and respecting local usage patterns. Skepticism was present about the scope creep of the project—from a simple sidewalk to a full beautification plan. Some respondents argued that funds should be directed toward more pressing needs like homelessness, healthcare, education, or road safety.

Financial Burden and Taxation

Many residents are already feeling stretched due to rising property assessments and the cost of living; some on fixed income, vulnerable to tax increases. There is frustration among those living in Queensland and Black Point relative to the request to pay taxes for services that may not be used or equitably distributed.

4.2. Public Support for the addition of an area rate to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/ MUP

Participants who support taxation to fund the construction/maintenance of sidewalks are willing to **pay a modest area tax rate to make sidewalks a reality and framed the cost as reasonable**. They believe that **the long- term benefits** —safety, accessibility, community enhancement, economic development in the region—are seen as far **outweighing the financial cost**. Respondents call for consistent investment across municipal boundaries and frustration over past neglect. **Sidewalks** are expected to beautify the area and enhance livability, also **increase property values and community equity**. There is belief that **investing in public space is “worth every penny,”** that **area tax is a fair model** that ensures **those who benefit contribute proportionally**. Also, **area rate would ensure that sidewalks are properly maintained**. They would support even more provided the purpose and impact of the tax are transparently explained.

Responses showed strong resistance to paying for infrastructure in Hubbards that does not serve Queensland and Black Point residents.

There was also a high number of respondents who did not support the **area rate and the concept of “perpetuity” as a funding mechanism** to make Hubbards eligible for sidewalks/ MUPs. Mistrust and concern were expressed related to lack of clarity and transparency around capital expenditures and long-term financial planning, current community tax management, shifting burden unfairly onto rural residents, funds raised would eventually exceed the project costs. Requests were made for a one-time fixed-fee capital expense rather than a recurring tax, caps, similar to Sheet Harbour's model, timelines, and reviews on future rate hikes.

Equity, fairness and access were questioned: many current and future local taxpayers who would bear the financial burden may not directly benefit from sidewalk use, instead tourists and non-residents would enjoy the infrastructure; many live on private roads and already pay out-of-pocket for maintenance, plowing, and repairs. Tax policy difference in Hubbards between HRM and Chester/ Lunenburg County results in higher taxes and lower benefits from HRM. Perpetual taxes and rising living costs will drive out lower-income families and make the area unaffordable.

Tax Affordability was also a primary reason for not supporting the area rate. Participants feel that the area rate was 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, fire and emergency services. Recent property tax hikes (20% in 2023 and over 25% in 2024) have strained finances.

4.3. Public support for the preliminary area rate boundary to include Hubbards, Queensland and Black Point

Respondents who responded in support to the preliminary area rate boundary agreed that the selected area includes the highest concentration of residents who live in or access services and amenities in Hubbards and who would benefit the most from this project. Some respondents would support this boundary if it is backed up by studies to determine this are the predominate users of this infrastructure and/or would receive the most direct benefit.

Others did not necessarily make a statement relative to the taxation region but to why Hubbards is a good place to build sidewalks/ MUPs. They noted the area accurately reflects where sidewalks are most needed and would be most used. Suggestions to expand the boundary further—especially toward Fox Point Beach and even Tantallon and highlighted a desire for broader connectivity.

A large number of residents, mostly from Queensland and Black Point and some from Hubbards, not living on St Margaret’s Bay Rd., questioned the area rate boundary and strongly opposed to it, expressing frustration with HRM planning to raise taxes with minimal return to their communities. They believe residents in Queensland and Black Point shouldn’t be taxed if they are geographically and functionally disconnected from the project and don’t benefit directly from sidewalk construction in Hubbards. Residents felt that the proposed area rate boundary was too broad and didn’t reflect lived realities. Concerns were raised about possible community tensions due to unequal distribution of benefits and financial burden.

Some opposing the community area rate boundary reiterated responses related to why sidewalks are not feasible in the area proposed and suggested the Community Centre area and Queensland Beach. Also, they expressed concerns about local autonomy if decisions are being made by people outside their community and HRM. Based on feedback provided, some are unaware that Hubbards is only partly included in Chester, Lunenburg County.

Alternative solutions were provided: improve road shoulders, target taxation to those in favour from Hubbards only and businesses directly benefiting, access provincial funding, infrastructure grants and one-time contributions from residents.