

RURAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

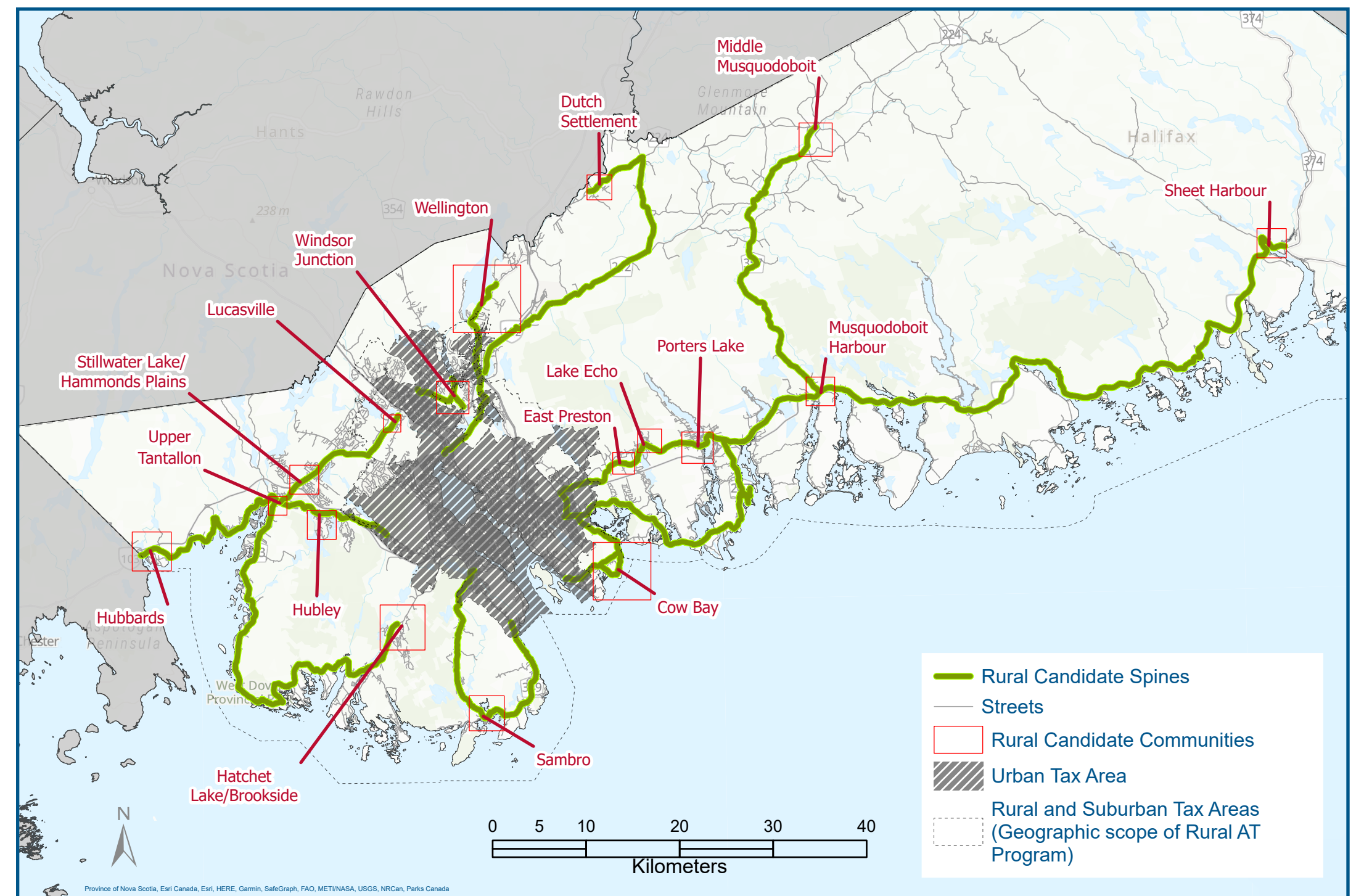


PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Rural Active Transportation (AT) Program (approved by Regional Council on February 8, 2022) includes the following:

- **Sidewalks (or multi-use pathways) in rural candidate community centres.**
- **“Spine” connections between rural candidate community centres.**
- Continued **support for community-led greenways and trails** with HRM’s Active Transportation Grant Program. For example, Atlantic View Trail, Blueberry Run Trail, and Gaetz Brook Greenway.

The priority under the program is the **construction of sidewalks or multi-use pathways (wider paved pathways) in five of the candidate rural community centres** to provide safer and more accessible options for those who walk, cycle and roll - creating improved connections that help support overall community development.



The five prioritized communities include: **Hubbards, Lucasville, Musquodoboit Harbour, Upper Tantallon, and Porters Lake.**

INITIAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

2023

Determine five priority communities from the seventeen rural candidate communities and a proposed area rate boundary for each.

2024

Engage property owners and residents on area tax rate, and proposed area rate boundary. Prepare report to seek Regional Council direction.

**2024
TO
2032**

If approved, candidate rural communities will enter planning, and design phase. Construction is planned to be completed no later than 2032. The area tax rate is only applied after the initial sidewalk or multi-use pathway is substantially completed. Candidate rural communities paying the area tax rate will continue to be eligible for new sidewalk or multi-use pathways.

NOTE:

- Future extensions of the sidewalk will be determined after the initial commitment of constructing sidewalks or multi-use pathways on the mainstreets of the five candidate rural communities is completed.
- Future projects will be determined using the community and sidewalk prioritization tool outlined in the Rural Active Transportation Program.
- The area tax rate (\$0.033 per \$100 of taxable (capped) property assessed) will not increase due to future projects or, extensions of the initial sidewalk or multi-use pathway.

AREA TAX RATE & AREA RATE BOUNDARY



WHAT IS THE AREA TAX RATE?

An area tax rate is a uniform charge applied to property owners within a specific boundary to support recreational activities or community capital projects, such as the implementation of a sidewalk or multi-use pathway. HRM policy states that suburban and rural communities should pay an area rate to partially fund sidewalk and multi-use pathway infrastructure, which is currently not included in the suburban or rural general tax rate. Revenue from the area rate (along with cost sharing from other levels of government and the capital projects fund) would be used for the construction and maintenance of sidewalks or multi-use pathways in the five prioritized candidate communities.

Administrative Order #2022-008-ADM specifies that the area tax rate will:

- be \$0.033 per \$100 (or \$33 per \$100,000) of assessed taxable (capped) property value;
- be applied to properties in the fiscal year after the initial sidewalk or multi-use pathway is substantially completed;
- be applied in perpetuity; and
- be applied to all residential, resource, and commercial properties within the area rate boundary.

Assessed Taxable Property Value	Area Rate Applied to Property Bill Annually
\$100 - \$100,000	\$0.033 - \$33
\$100,000 - \$200,000	\$33 - \$66
\$200,000 - \$300,000	\$66 - \$99
\$300,000 - \$400,000	\$99 - \$132
\$400,000 - \$500,000	\$132 - \$165
\$500,000 - \$1,000,000	\$165 - \$333
\$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000	\$333 - \$666

WHAT IS THE AREA RATE BOUNDARY?

Administrative Order #2022-008-ADM specifies that the boundary for the area tax rate could extend into neighboring rural communities if they are deemed to benefit from the implementation of the sidewalk or multi-use pathway.

The inclusion of neighboring communities is considered if the destinations in the community with the sidewalk or multi-use pathway were used by residents from other communities (e.g., large grocery stores, regional public services, schools, etc.).

The area rate boundary presented today is proposed based on data related to **travel patterns, school catchment areas, and regional destinations and services** in the candidate community that are utilized by residents of adjacent communities.

A key criteria for the area rate boundary is to hear from residents. This public engagement is to ground truth these findings and collect feedback from the community on their support for the area tax rate, and their agreement of the proposed area rate boundary.

Regional Council will make the final decision on the area rate and area rate boundary based on research findings and public and community stakeholders feedback.



Example: sample of destinations in Musquodoboit Harbour that are utilized by adjacent communities.

(Aerial Photo Source:

Musquodoboit Harbour Community Development Plan, 2017)

RURAL SIDEWALKS & MULTI-USE PATHWAYS



In rural areas, people tend to live farther from each other and the services they need, making it impractical to walk and necessary to drive to most places. However, rural areas often have concentrations of activity (e.g. commercial service centres), closely spaced and related destinations (e.g. a school near a community centre) and mixed-use hubs (e.g. village centres, hamlets, mainstreets) where walking from one place to another is practical and, as a result, should be encouraged and supported. In such places, the absence of any pedestrian infrastructure, like sidewalks, multi-use pathways or paved shoulders, can make walking unpleasant and potentially dangerous.

Sidewalks and multi-use pathways offer a designated space for people walking, rolling, and cycling. This infrastructure creates connections between key destinations for getting to work, school or running errands while providing a comfortable and attractive experience for users.



Example of a sidewalk.



Example of a multi-use pathway.

COST OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The **cost to construct a sidewalk or multi-use pathway** ranges from **\$1.5 to \$4 million/ kilometer**. This range in cost is dependent on the complexity of the project. The annual **cost to maintain a sidewalk or multi-use pathway** is **\$11,000/ kilometer**.

APPROXIMATE COST & REVENUE

In the Halifax region, new sidewalks (about 4km per year) are built within the urban service boundary, where the construction and maintenance is funded through the urban general tax rate. In rural areas, new sidewalks are built ad-hoc, and an area rate that is calculated based on the project cost is applied. This model does not provide consistency between rural communities, or financial sustainability for the infrastructure. The Rural Active Transportation Program offers a consistent area tax rate that is not tied to the cost of one project. The Rural Active Transportation Program is a long-term solution that improves the municipalities ability to respond equitably to sidewalk or multi-use pathway requests in rural communities.

Approximate cost and revenue for the first 10 years of the Rural Active Transportation Program's sidewalks or multi-use pathways on the mainstreets of five candidate rural communities.

Approximate total kilometers of sidewalk or multi-use pathway over 10 years for five prioritized communities.	Approximate cost of construction over 10 years for sidewalks or multi-use pathways for five prioritized communities.	Approximate cost of maintenance over 10 years for sidewalks or multi-use pathways for five prioritized communities.	Approximate area tax revenue over 10 years for five prioritized communities <u>proposed area rate boundaries</u>
10 kilometers	\$15 million to \$40 million	\$550,000	\$4 million to \$10 million