

A Healthy Cities Approach to Rural Villages:

The Village of Tatamagouche

Plan 6500 Integrative Team Project
Community Handout

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Prepared For

The Municipality of the County of Colchester
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Village of Tatamagouche is located within Colchester County on the Northumberland shore of Nova Scotia. The Village has an upcoming plan review, and the Municipality of the County of Colchester is looking for ways to incorporate community health and livability in this process. To do this, Turnstone Planning & Research developed interventions and recommendations that promote healthy living and that can be integrated into the Tatamagouche Plan Review. Specifically, the project had the following three objectives:

1. measure the current healthy built environment status of Tatamagouche using established and rural-appropriate assessment tools;
2. create a series of urban design, policy, and land-use zoning interventions that support and improve Tatamagouche community health; and
3. provide recommendations for healthy community guidelines for Tatamagouche in preparation for the Tatamagouche Plan Review.

The Turnstone team took a mixed-methods approach to achieve its three objectives. These qualitative and quantitative methods included background research and creating an annotated bibliography, generating a community profile by analysing the social determinants of health (SDH), and conducting site visits with the client and Tatamagouche Planning and Advisory Committee. The team also conducted a built environment assessment and a policy assessment to better understand the Tatamagouche health context. These research methods provided the team with important information that informed the proposed interventions and final recommendations.

Interventions

Project findings resulted in the identification of four focus areas to support community health in Tatamagouche:



Street Safety & Vehicle Controls

To ensure residents and tourists get outside and are active, it is essential that users feel safe travelling in Tatamagouche. Interventions specifically tackling street safety and vehicle controls are essential in creating a healthy community.

Street and Crosswalk Safety- make it easier and more accessible for pedestrians to travel. These include bump-outs, zebra crossing street markings, benches and street trees, and parklets along Main Street.

Vehicle Controls- reduce vehicle speed and improve driver awareness, thus helping maintain the human scale and pace of Tatamagouche streets. These include lane narrowing, speed humps/bumps/tables, and pinch points.



Recreation Spaces

Well-designed and maintained parks and recreation spaces of all sizes serve as venues for physical activity and increase access to nature for all ages. The Canada Healthy Communities Initiative is a grant program that may provide financial support for the following interventions:

Outdoor Fitness Equipment - equipment for anyone to use, regardless of income, ability, or age.

Outdoor Rink & Pickleball Courts- recreation space for use in both the summer and winter.

Splash Pad-outdoor water features to help families stay cool while being active in the summer months.

Bike/Micro-Mobility Share- affordable public bicycle service available to users on a short-term basis.

Activities Coordinator- an individual hired by the municipality to develop health-focused programs for the community.



Connectivity

By improving connectivity in Tatamagouche for pedestrians and cyclists, the community can become more welcoming for active transportation users. Improvements that increase connectivity include developing new trails, safer transportation options, and connecting existing trail and sidewalk networks.

Bike Lanes- support residents and visitors looking to travel using a more efficient, active, and environmentally-friendly option than driving.

Multi-Use Paths- maximises connectivity by linking existing trail networks and destinations.

Sidewalks - provides safe transportation options for pedestrians traveling through Tatamagouche.



Transit

An increasing number of older adults in Tatamagouche has created a need for transit systems. Many older adults are unable to drive, making grocery shopping, pharmacy visits, doctor's appointments, and visiting friends and family increasingly difficult. A transit system would allow these residents access to regional services by connecting Tatamagouche with the Colchester County.

Coordinated Transportation- using school buses outside of school hours as transit vehicles.

ParaTransit- door-to-door transportation services for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Ride-Sharing- carpooling with compatible matches through websites or apps, or a co-op where many users pay for shared vehicle-use.

Volunteer Transportation Program- local drivers can transport residents to services in other communities. This is already taking place in Tatamagouche and can be further supported through municipal programming.

Recommendations

The project findings also influenced policy recommendations that can be incorporated into the Tatamagouche Plan Review. Policy recommendations support community health by developing regional cooperation, taking advantage of existing services and infrastructure, and approaching planning problems through a health lens. Policy recommendations include:

Short Term Recommendations

1. Apply to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Grant using a recreation intervention.
2. Work with regional partners to create an activities coordinator position.

Medium Term Recommendations

3. Improve maintenance of paths, community spaces, and other municipal properties.
4. Support the community garden.
5. Prioritize pedestrian and active transportation infrastructure.

Long Term Recommendations

6. Provide more connections between Main Street and the rails-to-trails network.
7. Provide more opportunities to access and interact with the water through the rails-to-trails network.
8. Work with regional partners to improve existing transit opportunities.

Turnstone Planning & Research believes the interventions and policy recommendations proposed in this report will make Tatamagouche healthier, happier, and more vibrant, and should be incorporated into the Tatamagouche Plan Review.