Addressing the Needs of Rural Communities: Try Do’s Collaborative Approach

ATLANTIC ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT
May 23-24, 2018

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Overview

1. Try Do’s Partnership & Rural Access to Physical Activity Team
2. East Preston, Nova Scotia
3. Tools & strategies to address the needs of rural communities
   • Community Action Team Set-up & Engagement Plan
   • Data Collection: Walkability Audit & Traffic Counts
   • Action Planning: Partner & Community follow-up
4. Conclusions
   • Lessons learned to date and next steps
   • Potential to replicate this approach elsewhere
Try Do

Try Do is a **partnership** of community and government organizations and academic institutions working **together to enhance the health & well-being** of Halifax residents.

**Rural Access to Physical Activity (PA) Action Team - East Preston**

- **Catherine Droesbeck**, United Way Halifax
- **Carol Davis-Jamieson & Sascha Hamilton-Miller**, NS Dept. of Communities, Culture and Heritage
- **Natalia Diaz-Insense**, Ecology Action Centre
- **Tammy Ewing & Claudette Colley**, East Preston Day Care Family Health Resource Centre
- **Holly Gillis & Nora Dickson/Morgane Stocker**, Public Health (Central Zone)
- **Mary Angela Munro & Devon Bundy**, Parks and Recreation (Halifax)

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Rural Access to Physical Activity (PA) Action Team – East Preston

History of Project

• Try Do Stakeholder meeting in April 2017

• Stakeholder priority area: To improve access to Recreation / Physical Activity opportunities in rural communities

• Action Team: Rural Access to Recreation / PA

• Why East Preston? Community interest & readiness
East Preston, Nova Scotia

- Rural community
- 18 km North East of Halifax
- Pop. approx. 2,500
- One of the largest & oldest indigenous black communities in Canada
- Most recent published stats:
  - 95% of residents drive to work
  - Less than 2% walk
  - Less than 4% take transit

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East Preston, Nova Scotia

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East Preston, Nova Scotia

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East Preston, Nova Scotia
Data Collection: Walkability Audit

Community engagement event to assess walkability (Fall 2017).
Three routes audited along Highway 7 and Brooks Drive on Oct 28, 2017.
Additional route audited on Nov 24, 2017.

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Walkability Audit

AUDIT TOOL: Customized multiple choice questions and ranking (1-6)

1. **Space**: Is there enough room to safely walk?
2. **Traffic**: Was it safe to walk along the side of the road?
3. **Crossing**: Was it safe/easy to cross the street/road?
4. **Accessibility**: Would it be possible for people of all ages/abilities to walk?
5. **Other features**: Was the walk pleasant/attractive to you?

- Great community turn out (>30)
- Very broad age, gender and abilities represented: children & youth, families, seniors, etc.
- District Councillor also participated
- Total of 28 surveys completed

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1. Not enough room to safely walk

- No sidewalks or paved shoulders
- Very narrow & poorly maintained shoulders: eroding gravel, overgrown shrubs, cracked asphalt, etc.
- People often have to walk on the road

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2. Speed limit makes it very unsafe to walk

Speed limit is too high to safely walk or wheel

- Brooks Dr. is 50 Km/h ~ 30 MPH
- Hwy 7 is 70 Km/h ~ 40 MPH

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3. No crosswalks or crossing signals anywhere

Lack of crosswalks, crossing signals and poor visibility (blind spots) combined with

- lack of sidewalks, properly sized shoulders or poor shoulder maintenance, and
- 70km/h speed limit

make it very dangerous to cross the road.
4. Not walkable for people of all ages & abilities

R3.4 – EPRC to MLA Office

R2.4 – EPRC to Day Care

R4.4 – BPAC to EPUB Church

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5. Beautiful scenery, but “too hard to enjoy”

Not enjoyable due to lack of safe walking conditions:
- Lack of sidewalks/shoulder maintenance
- Speed limit
- Lack of crosswalks and crossing signals
- Inaccessible for all ages and abilities

Overall Walkability Rating: 9.4/30

How does our community stack up?
Add up your ratings to find out: __________

- 5-10 It’s a disaster for walking!
- 11-15 It needs lots of work. We deserve better than that.
- 16-20 Okay, but it needs work.
- 21-25 Let’s celebrate a little. Our community is pretty good.
- 26-30 Let’s celebrate! We have a great community for walking.

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Local Media Coverage

Pedestrians in East Preston unsafe


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## Data Collection: Traffic Counts

East Preston - 2345 Hwy 7 (near Lower Partridge River Rd, MLA office)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Vehicles (9AM - 6PM)</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>1,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Speed violations (&gt;70 km/h) Most 71-80 km/h</td>
<td>271 [40%]</td>
<td>391 [37%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February 2018</th>
<th>Feb 22, 2018 (WESTBOUND)</th>
<th>Feb 22, 2018 (EASTBOUND)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Vehicles (9AM - 6 PM)</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Speed violations (&gt;70 km/h)</td>
<td>276 [40%]</td>
<td>163 [22%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80km/hr</td>
<td>229 [83%]</td>
<td>151 [92%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-100km/hr</td>
<td>43 [16%]</td>
<td>12 [8%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 100km/hr</td>
<td>4 [1%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Action Planning: Engineering

Meeting with NSDTIR & HRM-Transportation (Dec 20, 2017 & Jan 10, 2018)

1. To share results and implications of Walkability Audit & Traffic data

2. To explore specific short, medium and long term interventions:
   - **Speed limit**: lower speed to 50km/h (Hwy 7) & 30km/h (Day care)
   - **shoulder maintenance & widening** (esp. near bridges)
   - **Crosswalks** and crosswalk signs
   - **Transit**: bus shelters or benches (Integrated Mobility Plan)
   - **Multiuse trail development** (PATA & HRTA)
   - Access to **Nelson Lake**

Action Planning: Enforcement & Encouragement

Pace Car Program (EAC)
Traffic calming & anti-speeding program
• Invented in Australia to slow traffic & take back streets
• Participants pledge to become a “mobile speed bump”
• Display emblems & drive the limit

https://ecologyaction.ca/pace-car

Place-making (Halifax Recreation)
Community building projects to make a ‘place’ special, meaningful, beautiful and interesting, where people want to go, feel safe & welcome.

https://www.halifax.ca/recreation/arts-culture-heritage/community-arts/north-common-plazas/neighbourhood-placemaking,

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Action Planning: Community Follow-up

East Preston Rec Centre - Jan 29, 2018

- Community shareback & engagement
- Action Plan - Priorities: speed reduction, transit & multi-use trail
- Community engagement: circles of involvement

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Lessons learned & next steps

Work together to identify needs & the best short term solutions

- **Speed Reduction (70>50 km/h)**
  Spring 2018 assessment

- **Pace Car Program Launch**
  East Preston Recreation Centre
  Winter Carnival – Feb 24, 2018
  23 pledges

- **Municipal & Provincial Funding** application
  to support the development of AT Plan for East Preston to address the barriers & priorities identified so far, with the support of key community stakeholders

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**for equitable, healthy living**

**Transporation and Infrastructure Renewal**

**MOBILE SPEEDBUMP**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PACE CAR**

**HALIFAX**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

**connect2**

**Musgo Rider Cooperative Ltd.**

**EastPrestonNS.com**

**Where Nature & Culture Connect**

**Try Do**
Rural Access to Physical Activity

Customized data-driven replicable collaborative approach that prioritizes equitable access to recreation, physical activity, and active & sustainable transportation for all

Key to success: Community engagement throughout

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Questions?

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