

Blacks Harbour Rural Active Living Assessment Final Report

Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

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1.0 Introduction

The Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA) Tools are designed to assess the physical activity “friendliness” of a community (e.g., walking, biking, playing) for its residents including youth, elderly and those with a disability. The RALA Tools work by collecting data on physical environment features and amenities, community characteristics, community programs, and policies that could potentially influence physical activity levels among residents in the community.

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health developed a Supplementary Food Environment Assessment Tool to accompany the existing RALA Tools to provide a more holistic evaluation of the community for living a healthy lifestyle. It allows the food environment of the community as well as the availability and accessibility of healthy food to be reviewed.

This report will serve as a summary of the conditions of Blacks Harbour for physical activity and healthy eating. The Tools can help to identify the strengths and the needs of a community. Areas for improvement can also be identified. Additionally, scores have been provided for the Community-Wide Assessment and the Programs and Policies Assessment that can be used as a baseline for future plans or projects and potential applications for funding opportunities.

2.0 Community Profile

Blacks Harbour is located in Eastern Charlotte County of New Brunswick. Surrounding communities include Pennfield, Beaver Harbour, and St. George, with Pennfield being the closest at 7.8 Km. Blacks Harbour has a population of 894 and covers an area of 9.06 Km². The population density is 98.7 people per Km².

The topography of the community is mostly flat. The streets are laid out in a non-distinct pattern. Land-uses within the community include residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional.

3.0 Health Profile

Tables were taken from the New Brunswick Health Council’s *My Community at a Glance* for St. George, Grand Manan and Blacks Harbour area.

Table 1: Body mass index (BMI) by age range or grade for the year 2014 for the St. George, Grand Manan and Blacks Harbour area.

Age Group	My Community (%)	New Brunswick (%)
Kindergarten to Grade 5	44	36
Grades 6 to 12	33	28
18-64	39	35
65+	43	41

Table 1 indicates that the BMI for Blacks Harbour is higher for all age ranges than the New Brunswick rate.

Table 2: Physical activity of at least 60 minutes per daily for school age children and youth.

Age Group	My Community (%)	New Brunswick (%)
Grades 4-5	32	35
Grades 6-12	25	22

Table 3: Physical activity during free time (moderately active or active daily) adults and seniors.

Age Group	My Community (%)	New Brunswick (%)
18 - 64	49	50
65+	41	46

Tables 2 and 3 indicate lower physical activity percentages for all age ranges except for those in Grades 6-12, which is slightly higher than the percentage for New Brunswick.

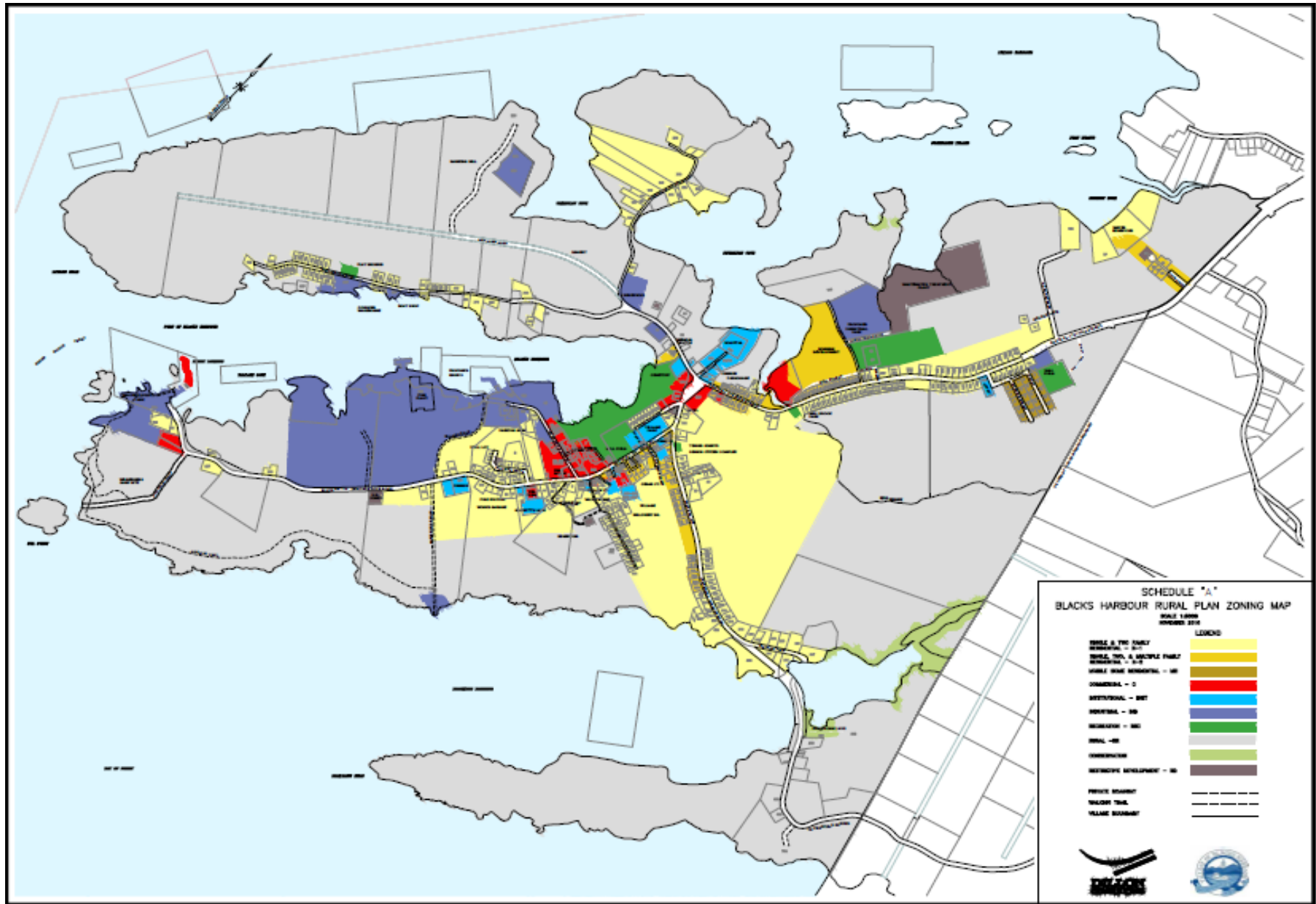


Figure 1: Map of Blacks Harbour.

4.0 Methodology

An on-the-ground assessment of the community was conducted by Public Health Inspectors (PHI) from the Health Protection Branch of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and a community representative on October-13-17 and 17/10/2017 (Friday, Monday and Tuesday). The following Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA) Tools were used:

- Community-Wide Assessment Tool
- Programs and Policies Assessment Tool
- Street Segment Assessment Tool
- Supplementary Food Environment Assessment Tool

For the assessments the “community centre” was determined to be the Blacks Harbour Elementary School.

5.0 Community Recreational Amenities

Being physically active is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. In fact lack of physical activity is a major contributor to poor health outcomes. This section reviews the recreational amenities available, which help to promote physical activity or make the healthy choice the easy/ default choice in Blacks Harbour as well as their condition and accessibility.

5.1 Trails

Connors Bros. Nature Preserve at Pea Point is located near the end of Wallace Cove Road in Blacks Harbour. The trail is not accessible for those with a disability.

5.2 Biking Paths

Not available in Blacks Harbour.

5.3 Parks

Mill Brook Park - Located on Main Street across from Charlotte County Storage. This park features covered picnic tables for the use of local residents and people traveling through the community. The park appears to be well maintained.

Main Street Park – Located next to Blacks Harbour Elementary on Main Street. The paths in the park consist of gravel walkways. The walkways appear to be well maintained. Washrooms are available when the tourist information centre is open in the during the summer months. There is also a new covered stage that is available for community events. All amenities in the park are wheelchair accessible.

5.4 Playgrounds

There are four playgrounds in Blacks Harbour

1. Blacks Harbour Elementary: New playground that is in good condition and can be accessed by neighbourhood children even when school is not in session.
2. Main St. near Patrick O'Conner Recreational Complex: This location includes a sand digger that can be enjoyed by children in wheelchairs. The park appears to be well maintained.
3. Wellington Road: The equipment appears to be well maintained and is fenced. Does not appear to be wheelchair accessible.
4. Deadman's Harbour Road next to community garden: Equipment includes one slide and a set of swings. Equipment is older but appears to be well maintained. Gravel surface appears to be overgrown with weeds.

5.5 Water Activities

Residents and visitors have been known to swim at the Pea Point Nature Preserve or in Deadman's Harbour, both of which feature a rocky bottom and cold water from the Bay of Fundy. A kayak or canoe could be launched into the water from either beach if a portage was present. Motorized or larger vessels are able to dock at the wharf located at Wallace Cove.

5.6 Community Recreation Centre

Not available in Blacks Harbour.

5.7 Private Fitness Facilities

Not available in Blacks Harbour.

5.8 Playing Fields

AMA McLean Field is a baseball field located close to the village limit on route 176. It is well maintained, wheelchair accessible and has parking available.

5.9 Courts

Not available in Blacks Harbour.

5.10 Ice Arena

Patrick O'Connor Recreational Complex – ice rink and curling rink. Ice rink is accessible to persons with disability however; locker rooms and upstairs areas may not be accessible to persons in a wheelchair. The curling rink is currently not used by the community; there is no active curling club.

5.11 Winter Activities

No organized winter physical activities available in Blacks Harbour.

5.12 Skate Park

No skate parks are available in the Village of Blacks Harbour. The nearest skate park is located in the town of St. George.

6.0 Public Schools

There is one public schools located in the Village of Blacks Harbour. Information on the schools can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: Community Public Schools.

School Name	Population	Location (km from Community Centre)
Blacks Harbour Elementary	154	Centre of Community

7.0 Community Walkability and Accessibility

Street Segment Assessment – Each street segment was assessed according to their characteristics, amenities and features. Seven street sections were audited as part of this assessment. Streets audited included sections of Main St., Brunswick St, Deadman’s Harbour Road, Wallace Cove Road and Wellington road. **Main Street** -Three sections along Main Street was assessed and in general is both walkable and accessible to persons with disabilities. A few issues exist where small sections of sidewalk are cracked or crumbling as well as the lighting is on the opposite side of the road of the sidewalks which may make it difficult to walk at night depending on the illumination from the lights themselves. **Brunswick Street** does not have sidewalks (except for small section at the intersection of Main St and Brunswick St.) shoulders are not well defined, narrow and are not accessible to persons with disabilities. Brunswick Street also has a blind crest which might make it difficult for walkers to see oncoming traffic. Deadman’s Harbour Road - is well maintained and is easily walkable and accessible to persons with disabilities. **Wallace Cove Road** does not have paved shoulders or sidewalks, however, there is a defined shoulder which would make it accessible to walkers. **Wellington Road** does not have a sidewalk or defined shoulders, the road is narrow and would not be accessible to

persons with a disability. Walkers were observed walking down the middle of the road during the assessment.

Community Bike-ability – The Village of Blacks Harbour does not have any dedicated bike lanes, however, Main Street thru to Wallace Cove Road have both defined shoulders and paved shoulders that bikers could use. In other areas of the Village the roads are narrow, without defined shoulders which make it difficult or unsafe for bikers.

The hiking trails at Connors Bros. Nature Preserve at Pea Point do not connect to any other trails and are not very accessible to persons with disabilities. There are no other walking or biking trails in Blacks Harbour

8.0 Programs and Policies to Support Active Living

Community programs and policies can help to support physical activity among community members including youth, the elderly and those with a disability. This section outlines community programs and policies in place that help to support physical activity and their accessibility to all individuals. Existing programs and policies at public community schools to support physical activity are also included.

Table 5: Community Programs and Policies.

Programs and Policies	Explanation
A policy that requires bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects.	No policy in place.
A program/policy to ensure regular clearing of snow and ice from Sidewalks	No formal policy but a snow removal program is in place.
A recreation department that offers physical activity programming.	The village of Blacks Harbour does not have a recreation department.
A program/policy that provides sliding-scale fee or subsidies for lower income residents.	Unknown
Private or not for profit agencies, businesses or organizations that offer physical activity programming.	The following is a list of all places that offer physical activity programs and spaces in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hockey Leagues – minor hockey and a men’s league. • Let’s Roll – Roller blading (held at school)
Program/policy to provide local public transportation to the community.	No formal program of policy to provide local public transportation.
Long-distance transportation programs.	Rural Lynx, a partnership between the Southwest New Brunswick Transport Authority Inc., the Southwest New Brunswick Service Commission, and Maritime Bus, began a 2-year pilot project in September 2017. Rural Lynx will provide service to Saint John and Charlotte County communities.

Table 6: School Programs and Policies.

Programs and Policies	Explanation
Walk to school program.	None available
School physical activity initiatives.	Track and field, cross country running, basketball teams. Skating provided for 8-9 weeks in partnership with town (including K- Grade 2 this year).
Established shared-use agreement between community and local schools.	School is available free of charge to non-profit organizations until 10 pm on weekdays.
Public school late bus option.	Late bus option available for Kindergarten to Grade 2. No late bus option for Grades 3-5.

9.0 Community Food Environment

Eating a healthy diet is another component of a healthy lifestyle. An individual's or family's ability to obtain healthy food on a regular basis is determined by their resources, but also by the local food supply and their ability to access it. Many studies have shown an individual's food choices and how well they eat is influenced by the local food supply and their ability to access food. Therefore, this section reviews the availability and accessibility of healthy food compared to other food amenities in the community.

9.1 Retail Food Environment

One grocery store was identified within the community of Blacks Harbour. The grocery store is wheelchair accessible and in good condition. Availability of products is similar to most grocery stores and includes fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products; however the variety may be limited. Baby food and formula is not carried.

A total of one convenience store was identified within the community. The convenience store has one display cooler with a small selection of fresh produce and deli products.

There are no farmer's markets in the community. The next closest farmer's market is located approximately 16.6 Km from Blacks Harbour. The farmers market runs from the end of June thru September each year and is open from 9-1 pm on Saturdays. Products available for sale include fresh fruit and vegetables, baked goods, and a variety of ethnic foods.

9.2 Community Food Resource Environment

Community food resources help to increase the availability of affordable healthy food options for everyone in the community. Community food resources available in the Village of Blacks Harbour include Food Bank and Community Garden.

Community Food Bank – Food Bank is available in the neighboring community of St. George approximately 18 km from the Village of Blacks Harbour. The food bank is open on Fridays from 11:30 – 2:30 pm. Resource may be inaccessible to persons who work during those hours and persons may not have transportation to access the food bank.

Community Garden - Community garden located on Deadman’s Harbour Road (old tennis courts) and is free and available for use by residents of Blacks Harbour. Garden is accessible with pavement surfaces and raised beds

No bulk purchasing programs currently exist in the Village of Blacks Harbour.

9.3 School Surrounding Food Environment

A total of one fast food outlet and one convenience store were identified within walking distance of the Blacks Harbour Elementary School.

10.0 Conclusions

The Community-Wide and Programs and Policies assessments were scored upon completion. The results of the scoring can be found in Tables 7 and 8 below. These scores can be used for comparison purposes of pre and post community interventions and changes.

Table 7: Community-Wide Assessment Results.

Infrastructure	Score	/Possible Total
School Location	6	/15
Trails	13	/20
Parks & Playgrounds	25	/25
Water Activities	5	/10
Recreation Facilities	16	/30
Grand Total:	65	/100

Table 8: Programs and Policies Assessment Results

Infrastructure	Score	/Possible Total
Community Policies	2	/10
Community Programs	8	/30
School Policies	15	/30
School Programs	10	/25
Grand Total	35	/95

This report is a summary of the opportunities for physical activity and access/ availability of healthy food in the Village of Blacks Harbour. The previous sections provide an inventory of infrastructure in the community for physical activity as well as their condition and accessibility. This can be considered a baseline that can be used as a starting point for future conversations,

plans and actions to improve opportunities for healthy living in the Village of Blacks Harbour. The information contained in this report can help to identify areas for improvement and aid in the development of plans to support active, healthy living. The scores contained in tables 7 and 8 can be used to compare the situation pre and post implementation of future plans.

11.0 References

New Brunswick Health Council (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: St. George Grand Manan Blacks Harbour Area. Retrieved from https://www.nbhc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/my_community_at_a_glance-19-st_george_grand_manan_blacks_harbour_area-nbhc-2017.pdf