

A Planning Tool Kit for Healthy Rural Communities

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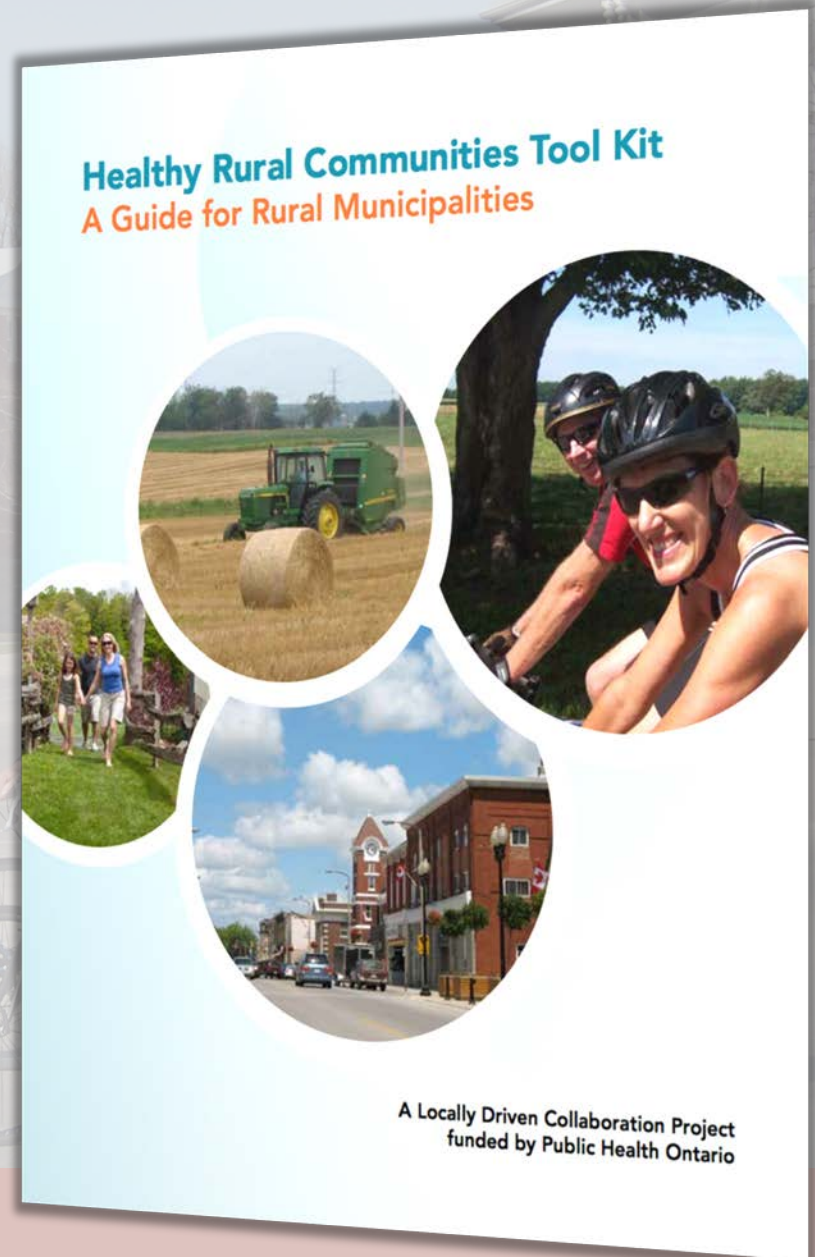
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**Ontario East Municipal Conference
Kingston: September, 2016**

With Thanks...

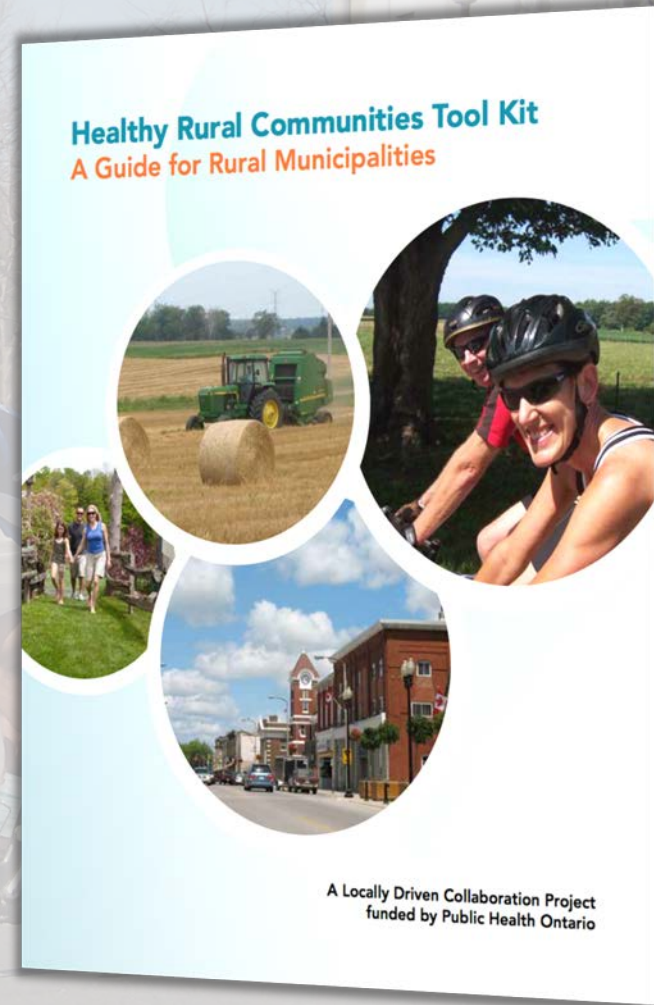
- funded by Public Health Ontario as part of the Locally Driven Collaborative Projects program
- Funded by OMAFRA
- Healthy Rural Communities Project Team Members (Health Units)
- OPPI

The views expressed in this presentation are the views of the project team and do not necessarily reflect those of Public Health Ontario.



At the end of our session...

- As part of our on-going research and outreach we hope to capture (on video) short success stories from across the province
- We are looking for innovative / successful projects that advance healthy rural communities (these will be profiled on our websites)
- Jenn and Taylor are all set up to record your stories



At the outset...

- Write your response on the provided paper.
- Please provide an example of a community activity/ event or plan that contributed to a healthier rural/ small town community (one sentence or phrase).
- We will collect these at the end of our session and revisit some of your ideas throughout the discussion.

Please provide an example of a community activity/ event or plan that contributed to a healthier rural/ small town community (one sentence or phrase):

Why Focus on Healthy Rural Communities?

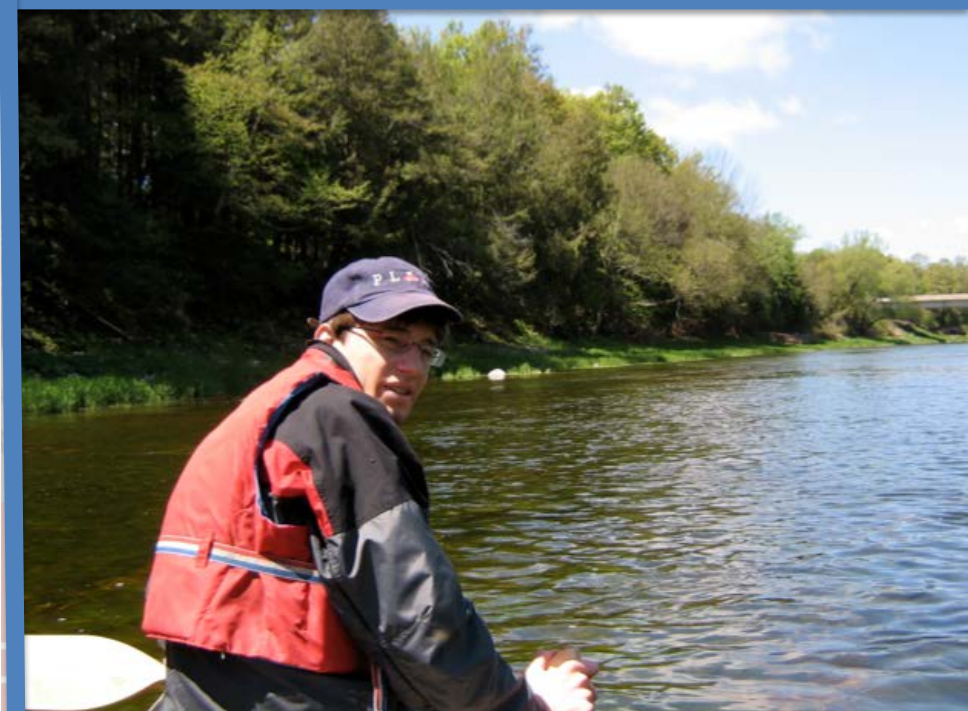
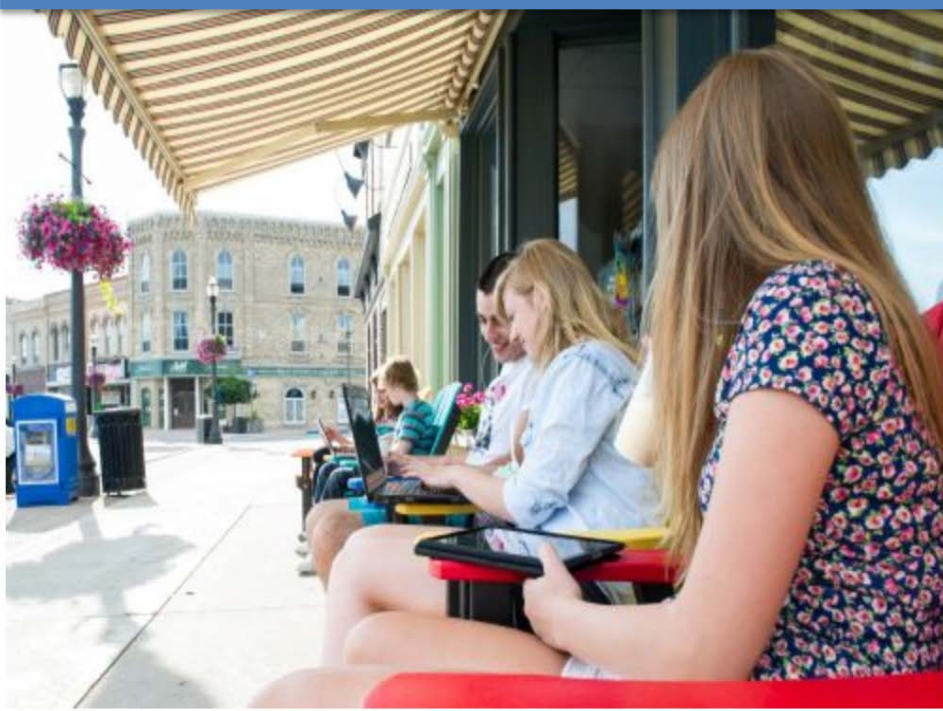
What do the following photos tell us about rural and small town communities and the relationship between planning and health outcomes?









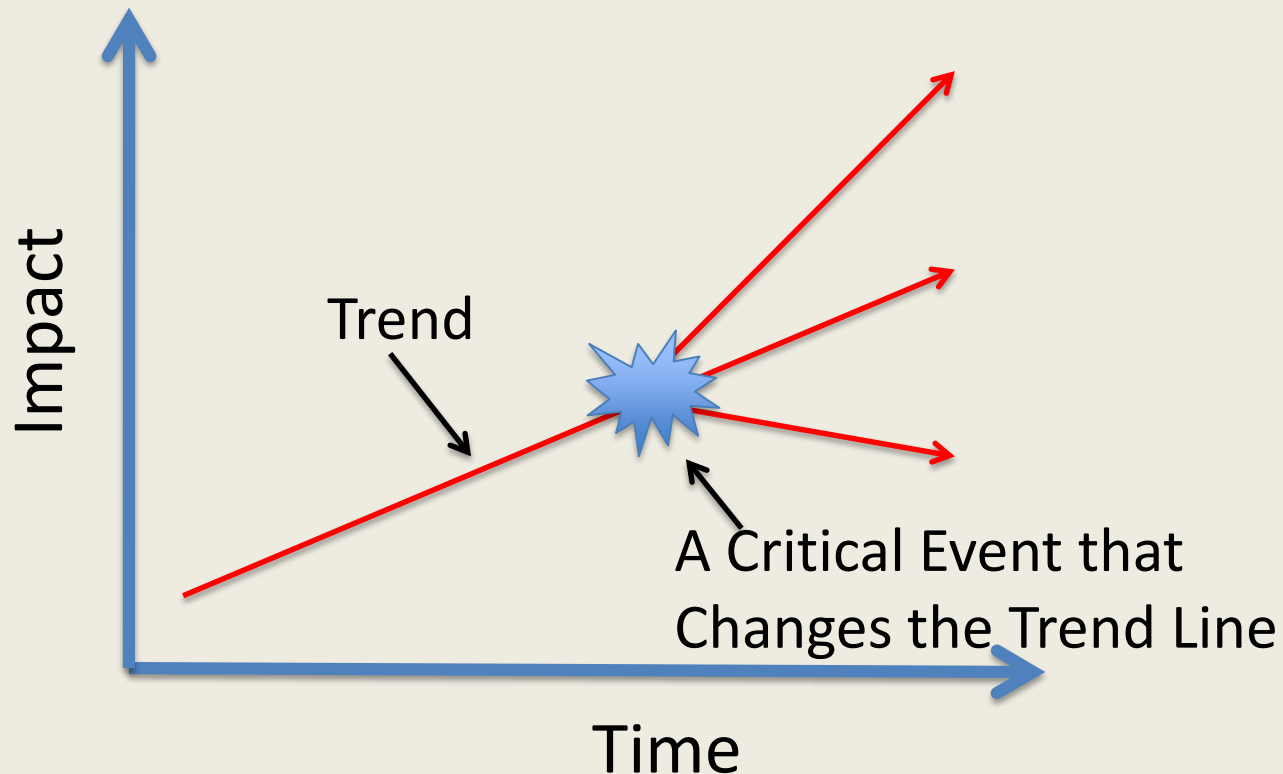




What comes to my mind is the word - sustainability

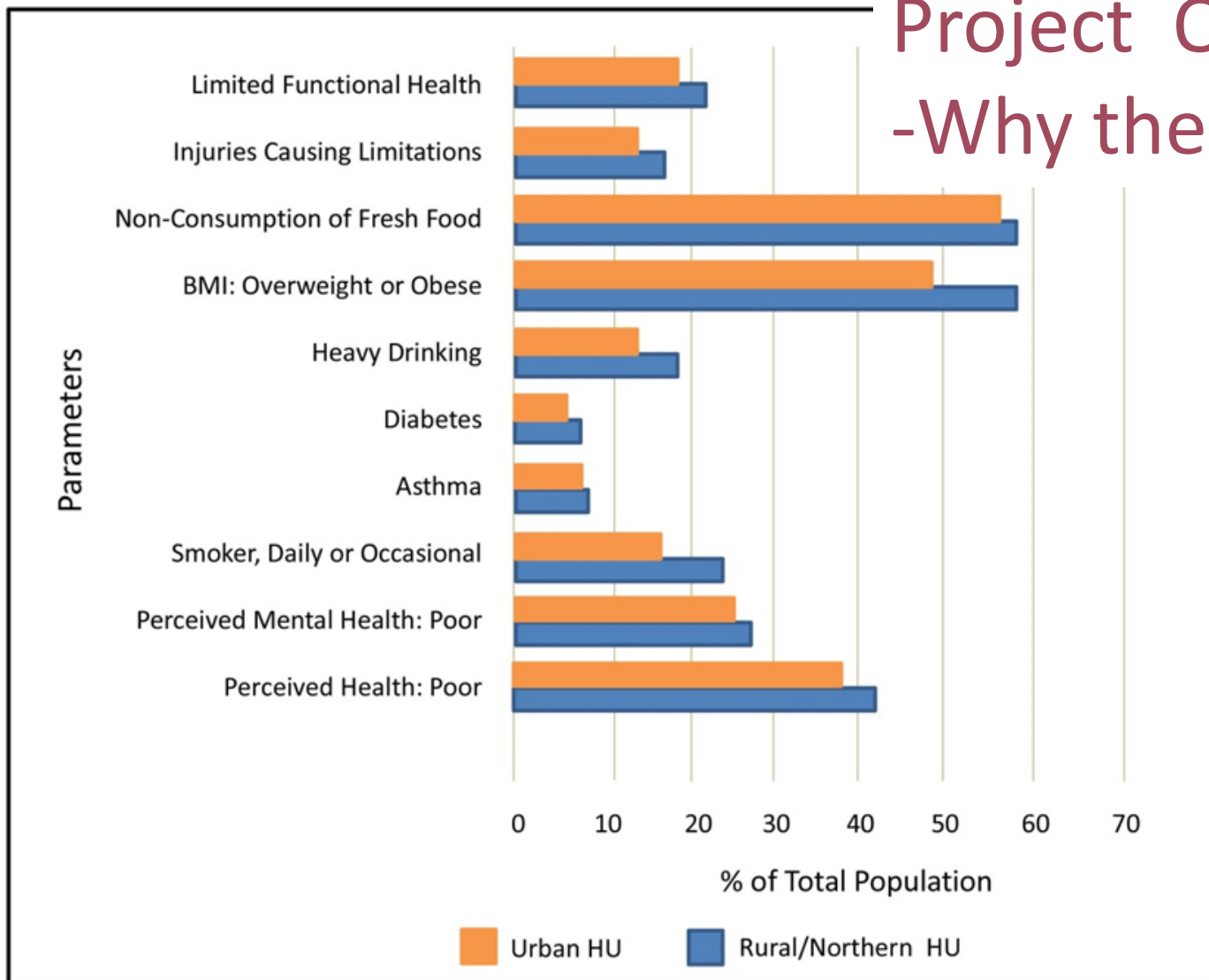
- Blending together
 - the economic,
 - the environmental and
 - the social
- And the relationship to Healthy Rural communities

Trends, Critical Events and Scenarios



Project Overview

-Why the Project?



Source: Statistics Canada 'Cdn Health Profile' – December 2013

The built environment can impact health in many ways

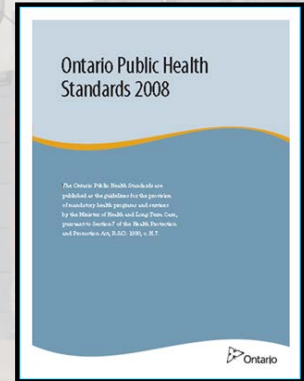


- Obesity + Physical Inactivity
- Chronic Diseases
- Climate Change
- Air Pollution
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Other Impacts

Public Health Mandate: Built Environment

Ontario Public Health Standards (2008)

- Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol
- Health Promotion and Policy Development
 - Chronic Disease Prevention Program
 - Health Hazard Prevention and Management Program



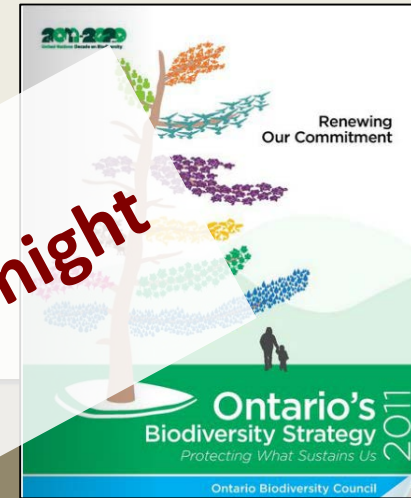
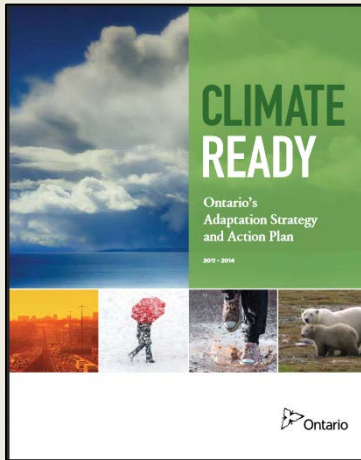
Ontario's Public Health Sector Strategic Plan (2013)

- Strategic Goal #4 - Promote healthy environments: both natural and built
- Collective Area of Focus #5 - Built Environment

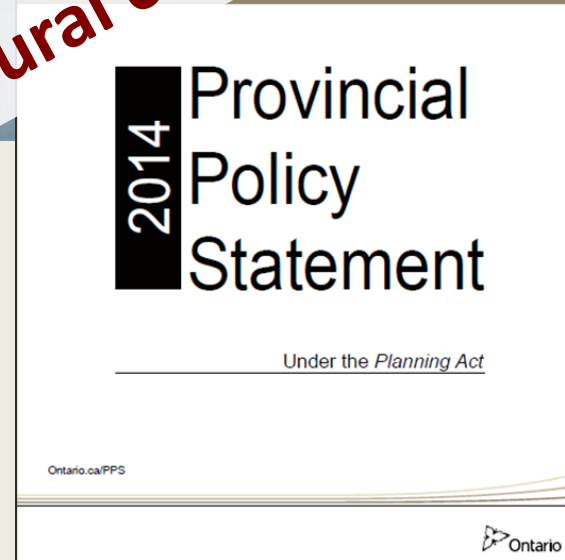


Why this project?

– Community Planning



But... Are there specific rural issues and challenges? And, are there strategies that might better address the rural context?



Are you up for a quiz?

Ten simple (☺) Questions to challenge you!



Question 1:

Rural (including Northern) Ontario includes an estimated 99.5% of the province's land mass but represents only ____ % of the total population (2011 Census).

A- 30

B- 21.2

C- 14

D- 9

Question 2:

To sustain our population “naturally” we require a birth rate of 2.1 children / woman in her child bearing years...

True or False?



Question 3:

Among the 34 OECD countries, which country has the largest and hence worst rural-urban gap with respect to levels of education in the work force?

- Canada
- Australia
- Portugal
- United States of America



Question 4:

The Aboriginal population is growing faster than the rest of the Canadian population due to higher birth rates.

True or
False?



Question 5:

66.5% of the residents in Halton Region perceive that they have good or excellent health. In Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge this number is:

A- 28%

B- 38.7%

C- 53.1%

D- 71.4%

Question 6:

42.8% of the residents of Toronto are overweight or obese (BMI). In northwestern Ontario the number is...

- A- 22%
- B- 38.1%
- C- 47.2%
- D- 65.5%



Question 7: Rural people have a higher intake of fruits and vegetables than urban people...

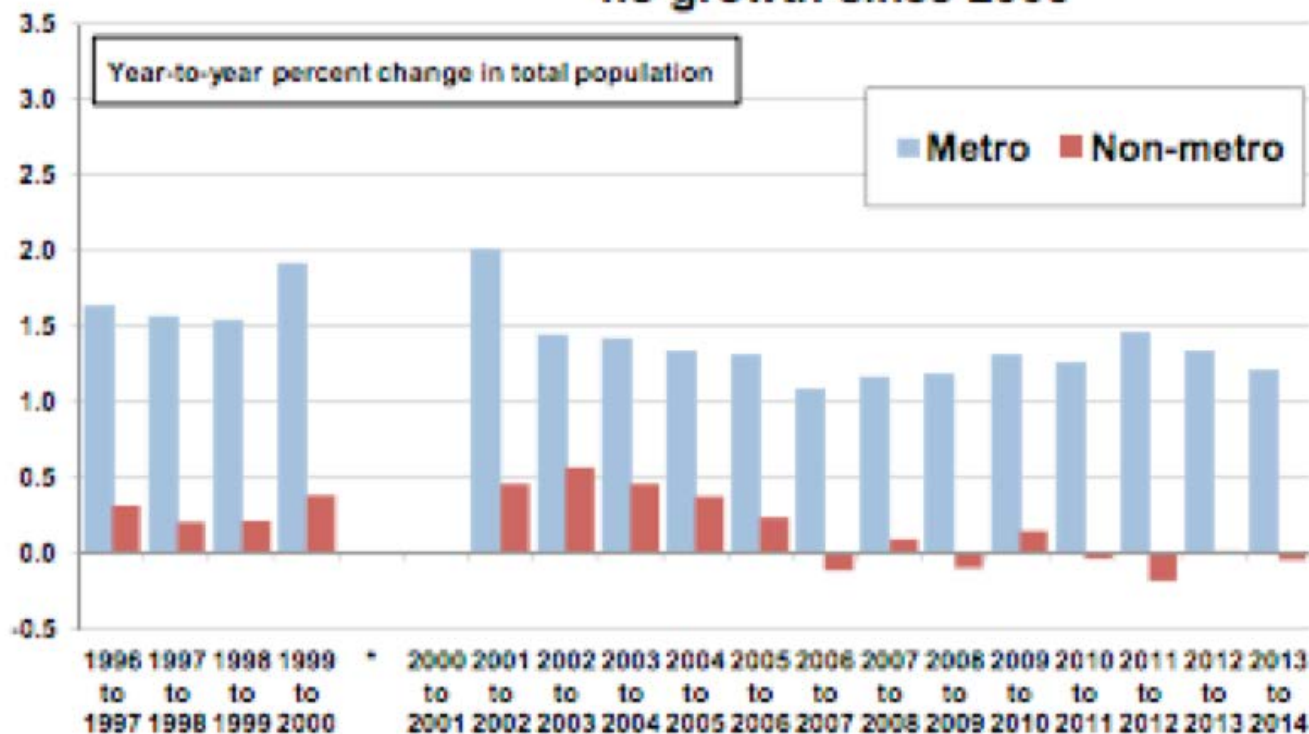
True or False



Question 8: As a whole, Ontario's non-metro

Figure 2

Ontario's non-metro population has shown no growth since 2006



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries.
Source: Statistics Canada. *Annual Demographic Statistics*, CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

Question 9:

People residing in urban health unit areas have a stronger sense of community belonging than people living in rural ones...

True
or
False



Question 10: Which region do you think suffers the most from arthritis?

- Northwestern Ontario
- Toronto or
- Haliburton



Bonus Question: Question 11:

Primary agriculture, while playing an important role in the Canadian economy, is responsible for only ____ of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

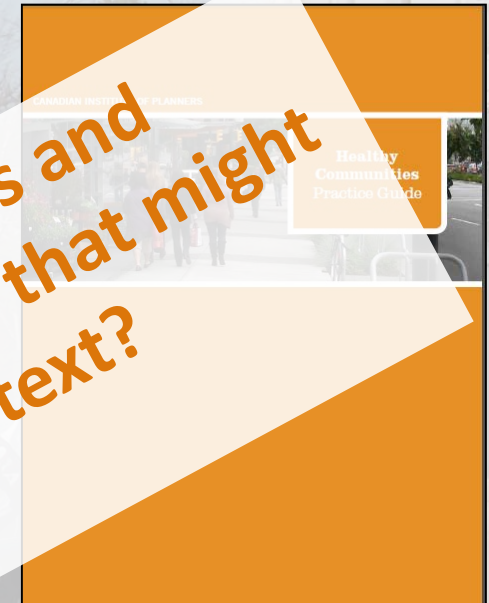
- 3.4%
- 1.7%
- 9%
- 15.3%



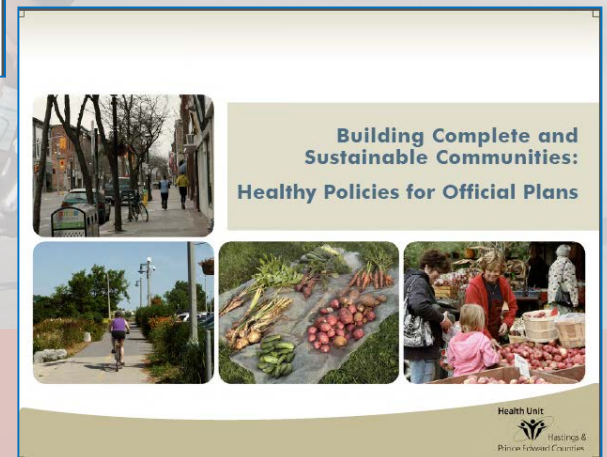
How did you score?



Project Overview: Builds on significant recent interest on the topic of 'healthy community' development



But... Are there specific rural issues and challenges? And, are there strategies that might better address the rural context?



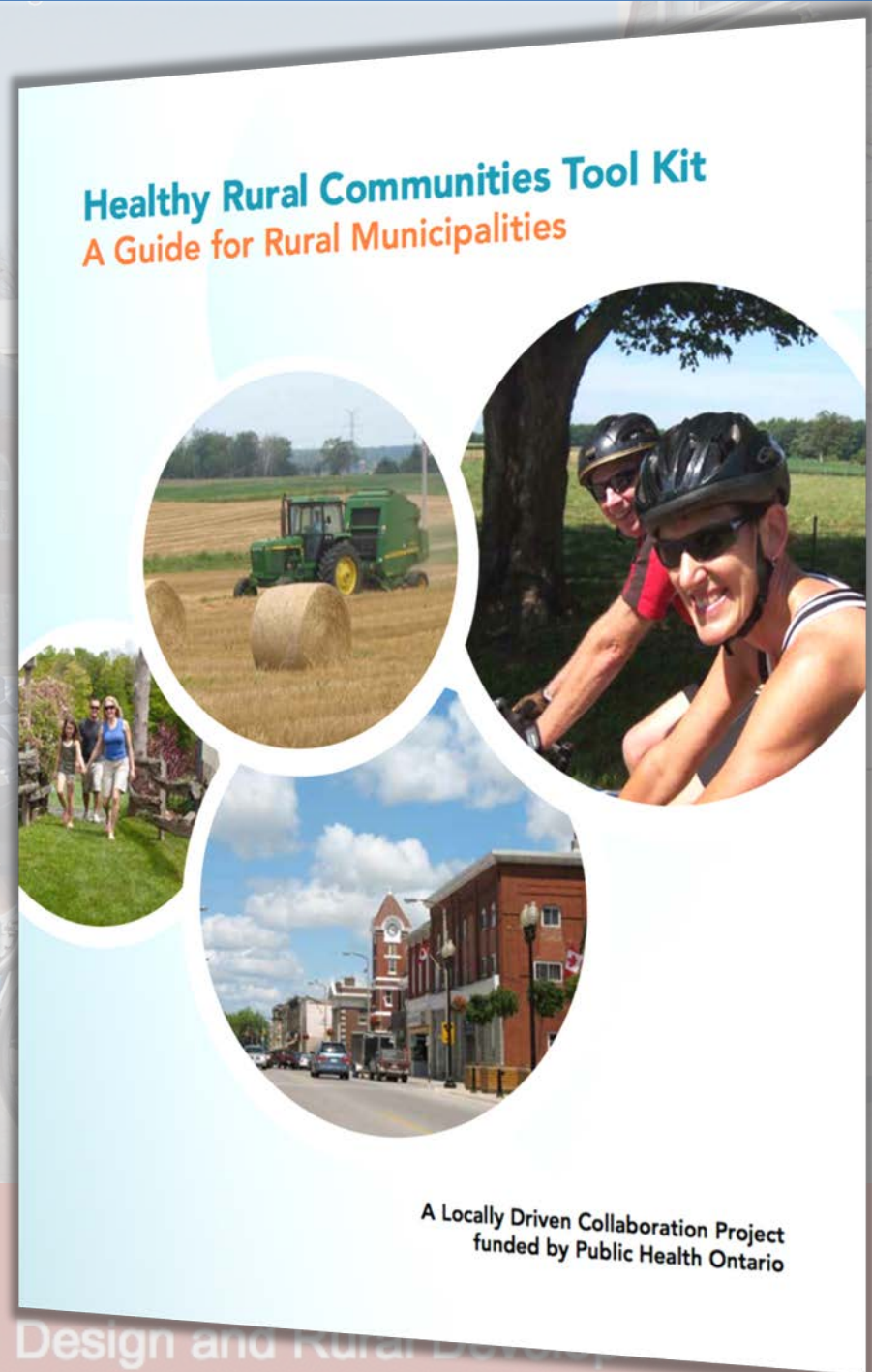
A Broad Definition of Rural Planning

Rural Planning Strategies to Enhance Health Outcomes



Tool Kit Preparation

- Process
- Organization
- Outcomes



Project 'Case Study' Innovations (some examples)

Appendix: Innovative Initiative Examples

Activating Kawartha Lakes, City of Kawartha Lakes, Ontario
Active Transportation Initiatives, Haliburton, Ontario
Active Community Engagement, County of Huron, Ontario
Creative Solutions for Water Quality and Tourism, Sioux Narrows – Nestor Falls, Ontario
Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre, Hanover, Ontario
Accessibility Plan, Township of Prince, Ontario
Value Added Agricultural Practices, Township of Scugog, Ontario
Festivals in Trent Hills, Municipality of Trent Hills, Ontario
Local Food Initiative, Haliburton, Ontario
Environmental Initiatives, Town of Orangeville, Ontario
Spruce the Bruce, County of Bruce, Ontario
Transportation Management Plan, County of Grey, Ontario
Rural Agricultural Strategy, Halton Region, Ontario
Community Sustainability Plan, Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, Ontario

A diversity of Innovative and "cool" practices from across rural Ontario

Innovative Case Studies (con't)

1 Title

City of Kawartha Lakes
Theme: Community Design
and Land Use Planning
Population: 73,214

Contact

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HKPR District Health Unit
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Key Lessons, it is important to:

- Have the goal to be vibrant
- Encourage community support, education and involvement
- Not 'plan in a box'

Initiative

Rural communities achieving walkability through community design and land use planning.

Context

The City of Kawartha Lakes has recently developed a variety of policy documents that focus on creating active and healthy rural communities:

- the City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan (2012);
- five Community-based Secondary Plans (one for each population centre);
- the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP);
- a Growth Management Strategy and a Food Charter.

Official Plan Amendment Policy:

18.13.26. Sidewalks shall be located to provide uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement to commercial areas, transit stops and all community amenities, and shall have regard for the space between the building and the roadway in non-residential areas.

Innovative Features

Activating Kawartha Lakes

- This initiative consisted of walking audits, bicycle design, and an expert in pedestrian safety.
- He is a consultant that focuses on walkability and has invited to town community members and stakeholders that took part in scheduled walking audits.
- The goal was to raise awareness about issues and destinations relating to the built environment and walkability, and to explore potential solutions.

Key Lessons and Tools

- Develop Community-based Secondary Plans
- Encourage collaboration between the municipality and health unit.
- Gain the support of Council.
- Have the goal to be vibrant and encourage community involvement in the process of policy development.
- Educate community members and work together.
- Don't 'plan in a box' and be open to new and innovative ideas.

2 Title

Haliburton

Theme: Active Transportation/
Active Communities
Population: 17,026

Contact

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Key Lessons, it is important to:

- Have a committee or community-based group
- Make connections between initiatives in the community
- Start with one manageable goal

Initiative

Rural communities achieving active transportation through community design and community-based groups.

Context

A large amount of active transportation advocacy, planning and promotion in Haliburton has occurred through the health unit and in partnership with the Communities in Action (CIA) Committee.

Active transportation initiatives are focused in the Villages of Haliburton and Minden. The active transportation projects and ideas were focused on the villages, in order to make implementation more manageable and achievable.

Official Plan Policy:

2.4.2.11 In a rural, dispersed community transportation facilities are important. Trails, corridors, roads and rights-of-way for significant transportation, recreation and infrastructure facilities will be protected for future use. The County will continue to keep current a road needs study in order to properly plan its road system.

Innovative Features

- **Park the Car and Get Moving**
This involved the development and distribution of walk, bike and active maps that showed walking routes and destinations around the villages. Large versions of the maps were installed in sign kiosks located in parking lots to further encourage people to park their cars and walk.
- **Share the Road Program**
The county has been adding 1.0 - 1.2m paved shoulders on county roads when they have been up for reconstruction. About 32 km of paved shoulder have been added, some of which are within a 5 km radius of villages.
- This project has been a partnership between the County, CIA and health unit, and includes the installation of signs and bike racks, as well as campaign posters, newspaper ads and distribution of educational brochures, to educate the public.

Key Lessons and Tools

- Have a committee or community-based group to whom active transportation is important.
- Make connections between active transportation and various initiatives occurring in the community to encourage funding. i.e. Economic Development, Cultural Planning.
- Focus on something manageable (such as working within one area of a community to start).
- Apply for grants where various partners and community groups can be in support of and part of the application; this increases chances of success.

Tool Kit: Layout

Section Four: Rural Land Use and the Built Environment, continued

4.3.8 Take action with regard to agriculture...

Why are agriculture and agricultural practices important?

- Agriculture is important to many rural economies. Permitting diversification on-farm, providing more flexibility and protecting agricultural uses and normal farm practices can encourage and protect sustainable farms and farmers (MMAH, 2014).
- Agriculture also provides a source of fresh food and employment opportunities and more directly connects consumers with the food that they eat.
- Agriculture is fundamentally connected to soil, air and water, and proper agricultural practices can contribute positively to each of these attributes.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Policies and definitions in the new 2014 Provincial Policy Statement safeguard and encourage agricultural feasibility of rural economies by:
 - » permitting more on-farm diversified uses, such as agri-tourism;
 - » providing more flexibility for agriculture-related uses and
 - » protecting and promoting agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and normal farm practices in accordance with provincial standards (policy 1.1.5.8).

Halton Region case study

- Halton Region has developed a Rural Agricultural Strategy; other regions and counties have also developed agricultural strategies. The goals of the Strategy are to encourage viable farm succession, a healthy rural economy, successful agri-tourism and opportunities for supplemental income for farmers.
- The specific initiatives to make these goals possible include permitting small business operations, rural services to support farming and economic strategies specifically geared at farms and agriculture as well as agri-tourism strategies and the promotion of local food and unique crops.

Township of Scugog case study

- The Township of Scugog has a comprehensive zoning by-law that allows for home occupations and home industries.
- These industries are meant to serve the surrounding farm community and could include: small welding shops, woodworking businesses and bed and breakfasts as well as other home occupations.
- These home industries are considered small business incubators, which could move into larger employment areas in the future.



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Section Four: Rural Land Use and the Built Environment, continued

4.3.10 Take action with regard to access to local food...

Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Support the consumption and production of local food. Municipalities can do this by protecting farmland, supporting farmers' markets and by supporting activities such as on-farm sales. Official plan policies and zoning by-laws should also support farm retail markets. See for example: *Jurisdictional Analysis and Best Practices for Land Use Planning Affecting Direct Marketing and Agri-Tourism Operations in Ontario and Farmers' Markets* across Ontario.
2. Recognize that local food is an economic opportunity and also provides health benefits. Local food production should be supported as well as opportunities for farmers to connect with customers. This could be encouraged through the development of local food charters. See for example: *Kawartha Lakes Food Charter*.
3. Implement by-laws that protect spaces for community supported agriculture, community gardens and agricultural land for food growing and production and provide better opportunities for local food processing and sale.
4. Consider promoting new methods of acquiring local food such as 'gleaning' (i.e. foraging for food in the wild such as hunting, fishing and collecting edible wild items).

Other resources

- Gilliland, J., & Sadler, R. (2012) Mapping Food Accessibility in the Built Environment of Chatham-Kent. Human Environments Analysis Laboratory (HEAL): University of Waterloo. <http://www.theheal.ca/publications.php>.
- Let's Talk Food - A Food Policy Council for Chatham-Kent.
- Hastings & Prince Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit - HPECHU (2012) Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Official Plans.
- Public Health Agency of Canada - PHAC (2012) Evaluating Outcomes of Community Food Actions: A Guide.
- Sustain Ontario is a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that promotes healthy food and farming. Retrieved from: <http://sustainontario.com/>.
- Best Practices in Local Food: A Guide for Municipalities (2013).



Tool Kit – ‘Action Items’ Identified from Research



Thinking about these 13 themes:

- *Consider the innovative examples/successes from your own communities that you identified at the outset of this session....*



Community Design / Land Use Planning

or

Active Transportation:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?

Action One - Community Design and Land Use Planning

Why are community design / land use planning important?

- They help to build robust communities by managing and directing land use to achieve healthy, liveable and safe communities.
- They help to create communities as good places to live, work, learn and play in close proximity to one another.
- They promote complete and compact settlements. This is applicable in rural areas where the revitalization of existing towns, villages and hamlets is encouraged. Some communities must deal with populations that are even more widely dispersed. These include places where large-scale agriculture, natural regeneration of poorer agricultural land and recreational properties compose substantial amounts of land. Complete and connected communities located in these areas need other creative responses – for example, high speed internet connectivity and the provision of secondary road or waterway networks (MMAH, 2014).
- The creation of community design guidelines clarify the meaning of general official plan policies and put these policies into practice for new development in a community.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Activity destinations and facilities, whether they be a naturalized trail system, dedicated bike paths or lanes, children's park or a formal recreational facility (such as soccer fields, swimming pools etc.) should be adequately distributed throughout a community, making access to such facilities as equitable as possible.
- New streets should have good connectivity with the existing street pattern. In addition, sidewalks should have clear connections to trail systems within a community.

City of Kawartha Lakes case study

- The City of Kawartha Lakes has recently developed a variety of land-use planning documents that focus on creating active and healthy rural communities.
- Activating Kawartha Lakes was an on the ground initiative where the community was invited to take part in walking audits with a walkability consultant to build on the policy work completed to date. These walks and the resulting photo visions of specific sites proved to be successful and provided inspiration for the implementation of more walkable and active design elements in the community. To view photo visions, please see: [City of Kawartha Lakes Photo Visions](#).



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Action Three - Community Engagement and Capacity Building...

Why are community engagement and capacity building important?

- The community is an important resource to help achieve mutual goals, and community engagement increases municipal capacity. Municipalities can leverage the expertise and knowledge of community members on a volunteer basis.
- Community engagement provides the perspectives of citizens, both as individuals and collectively.
- Engagement and participation are vital in creating effective policy and programs for community health that are inclusive and holistic.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Engagement activities provide a forum for citizens and other stakeholders to voice their opinions and ideas, share local knowledge, learn from others and obtain important information. This allows the opportunity to involve people in the processes and decisions that affect their lives. Empowered people and communities can be more resilient in the face of adversity (CIP, 2012).
- In Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, workshops are organized for farmers in order to learn about economic strategies, specifically related to agriculture.
- Some rural communities are using social media to engage and connect with residents. As an example, Elgin County has created a Facebook page and Twitter account for their Community Improvement Plan. As well, the Village of Brussels in Huron County has a Facebook page to update residents on events and initiatives occurring in the community. Please see: [Elgin County Community Improvement Plan](#) and [Brussels Downtown Revitalization Group](#)

Huron County case study – Jane's Walk

- Jane's Walk was a community-organized event where residents walked around downtown Goderich and discussed design elements that could improve the community.
- Jane's Walk was innovative for a rural community because it originated as an urban idea and was implemented in a rural downtown area.
- Jane Jacobs, an urbanist who helped to protect neighbourhoods in Toronto and New York, provided inspiration for the walks, which are held around the world. Jane was an activist for people places and wrote about how cities can function as spaces for people.



Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Use creative ways to engage the public in the planning process in addition to the Planning Act requirements. As an example, Haldimand County hired a skateboard professional to give credibility and information on public spaces for youth.
2. Leverage non-traditional organizations as partners involved with public health, recreation, engineering, business and youth.
3. Seek additional funding and foster public and private partnerships.
4. Tips from practitioners:
 - Develop safe spaces where people can engage with each other.
 - Build council support through education and awareness. This helps new projects acquire public funding and encourages champions for projects – a dedicated individual who is willing to see a project through contributes significantly to a positive outcome.
 - Engage creative approaches to encourage citizen engagement which could include informal public gathering mechanisms, such as coffee shop settings and design charrettes.
 - Use social media to connect with a wide range of citizens. Social media tools can include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Other resources

- Ball, J., Caldwell, W., & Pranis, K. (2010). Doing Democracy with Circles: Engaging Communities in Public Planning
- Canadian Institute of Planners - CIP (2012) [Healthy Communities Practice Guide](#)

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Community Engagement and Capacity Building:

Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?

Water or Air Quality:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?

Action Four - Water Quality

Why is water quality important?

- Water provides economic and social benefits and is the basis for healthy and diverse ecosystems and communities. Water is used by humans for consumption and by industry to support our economy. It also supports ecological processes including aquatic life and aquatic ecosystems (MMAH, 2014).
- In rural areas, sources of drinking water can come from surface water features or groundwater aquifers, and these sources are vulnerable to contamination or depletion. Drinking-water wells and intakes serve individual homes, clusters of homes and rural settlement areas.
- Healthy shorelines provide a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. They help to control surface run-off and erosion and filter associated nutrients and harmful pollutants, therefore protecting water quality. Healthy shorelines also help regulate temperature and microclimate, screen noise and wind, preserve the aesthetic appeal of the landscape and provide many other cultural, social and economic benefits through recreation and tourism (MMAH, 2014).

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- There are many threats to drinking water quality, including both point sources and non-point sources contaminants. Effective stormwater management, including techniques such as installation of pervious surface treatments, can reduce the potential for contamination from surface run-off during storm events.
- For existing private well and septic system owners, the promotion of well stewardship and the need for support of stewardship programs is apparent.

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls case study

- The community of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls is a small northern community that began implementing new zoning by-laws, never used before in their municipality, in order to maintain and improve water quality.
- Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls added policies to their official plan relating to shoreline protection. A new implementing zoning by-law has established a minimum setback from shorelines for new development.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Work with the conservation authority if it exists for your region to ensure that your source water protection plan is being properly incorporated. Efforts to support clean drinking water supplies through source water protection planning and other mechanisms (e.g. mandatory septic system re-inspection by-laws) are important. Please see [Drinking Water Source Protection](#).
2. Work with the conservation authority to ensure that planning efforts can incorporate a focus on watersheds/sub-watersheds. This can contribute to an ecologically-focused approach to protecting water resources and other natural features.
3. For existing brownfields (such as abandoned heavy industrial sites), ensure that your community has considered various mechanisms to have these sites cleaned up. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a large number of resources to aid with this. See for example [Brownfields Resources](#).
4. Work with your health unit and building permit staff to ensure that you are following best practices related to public and private sewage treatment. As an example, Huron County has started a septic system maintenance program. Please see: [Healthy Lake Huron](#).
5. A number of municipalities have developed lake plans. These are created to protect the water quality of lakes and assess lake impacts and carrying capacity. See for example: <http://www.lakeplan.com/>

Other resources

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - MMAH (2014) An Introduction to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014: Rural Ontario.

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Tourism or Nature:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?

Action Six - Tourism

Why is tourism important?

- In many rural areas tourism-based businesses and services are an important sector of the economy.
- Tourism has the ability to improve the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors. It can enhance the use of a community's natural assets, character and cultural attributes.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- The Eastern Ontario Trail Alliance has developed innovative art and heritage trails to attract residents and visitors. The trails have been developed based on various themes; one particular trail system is based on art and heritage amenities. This encourages tourism and active transportation simultaneously. There are galleries and antique and treasure shops for residents and visitors to explore.

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls case study

- The recently opened 'Northern Ontario Sportfishing Centre' in the Township is a significant new facility. It is meant as a tourist, education and cultural centre, providing a service to locals and visitors alike. The tourism centre contributes to local employment and attracts approximately 12,000 visitors in the summer.

Halton Region case study

- Halton Region has an Agricultural Tourism Strategy, which is being led by the Economic Development Department.
- Part of Halton Region's Economic Development vision includes collaborating with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture's Regional Tourism Organization and local destination marketing organizations in tourism marketing activities through social media, online advertising and the destination marketing of Halton's tourism resources: Halton Region Economic Development Strategy.
- One example of agri-tourism in Halton Region is the Halton Pumpkin Trail.



Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Consider developing a tourism strategy or bring the focus to tourism through community economic development. A tourism strategy can help to identify, build and develop infrastructure that will support the tourism sector while also providing infrastructure and resources that will improve quality of life of residents.
2. Tips from practitioners:
 - Come up with creative ways to acquire the necessary funds; these could include writing funding proposals and applying for grants.
 - Build a coalition with the business community and council.
 - Break a project down into manageable pieces.

Other resources

- Creativity, Tourism and Economic Development in a Rural Context: the case of Prince Edward County (2010)
- Canada's Creative Corridor - Connecting Creative Urban and Rural Economies within Eastern Ontario and the Mega Region (2009) Martin Prosperity Institute Report

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Action Seven - Planning for Special Age Groups

Why is planning for special age groups important?

- Rural communities have larger proportions of aging populations when compared to larger urban centres.
- Transportation access is consistently identified as a major barrier in studies on the impacts of an aging demographic (OPPI, 2009).
- Two of the issues which currently face many rural communities are out-migration of youth and an aging population.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- The issue of aging population is a major social planning topic and the planning for the challenges of an aging population is garnering greater attention recently. Rural communities faced with aging populations will need to examine mechanisms to increase transportation options, and geriatric support services (Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010).
- Innovative ideas for transporting youth to recreational amenities in rural municipalities include late night school buses or shuttles and organized car pools.

Township of Prince case study - aging communities

- The Township of Prince has created a 2013-2018 Accessibility Plan. The plan includes extending bus services from Sault St. Marie into the township, and Prince Township has an arrangement with the city for a bus to come to the corner of two highways. Please see the [2013-2018 Accessibility Plan](#).
- A co-op program funded by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Association is a key item that has provided the municipality with funding for their Strategic Plan and Accessibility Plan.

Town of Hanover case study - youth planning

- The Town of Hanover is in the process of developing a Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre, a precedent taken from the community of Ingersoll. Please see: [Fusion Youth Centre website](#).
- This type of facility would provide services such as education, recreation, social services and exposure to technology.
- This type of youth facility would be geared to young people who are not planning on pursuing post-secondary education. The centre would aid these youth in finding alternative employment options that would allow them to remain and reside in Hanover.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Ensure that your planning initiatives bring a focus to the needs of an aging population. The requirements and needs in aging populations will be unique in terms of accessibility, services and transportation issues. The County of Brant & City of Brantford have developed a Master Aging Plan for the comprehensive needs of an aging community. Please see: [County of Brant & City of Brantford Master Aging Plan](#).
2. Ensure that your planning documents have consideration for youth, such as the inclusion of skateboard parks, arenas and sports fields, among other activities.
3. Develop a youth retention strategy. Provide opportunities for education and employment. Take a community economic development approach and seek out opportunities that could exist for youth in your community.
4. Tips from practitioners:
 - Use other communities as inspiration; the Town of Hanover is taking on a youth initiative based on the existing one in Ingersoll.
 - For communities in northern Ontario, try connecting with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Association.
 - Share ideas and resources with neighbouring communities.
 - Keep an eye out for grants that would allow the possibility of co-op employment.
 - Engage your senior population as volunteers and in leadership positions. This will benefit the community and provide opportunities for individuals.



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Planning for Special Age Groups or Safe and Affordable Housing:

Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?

Agriculture or Access to Local Food: Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?

Action Eight - Agriculture

Why are agriculture and agricultural practices important?

- Agriculture is important to many rural economies. Permitting diversification on-farm, providing more flexibility and protecting agricultural uses and normal farm practices can encourage and protect sustainable farms and farmers (MMAH, 2014).
- Agriculture also provides a source of fresh food and employment opportunities and more directly connects consumers with the food that they eat.
- Agriculture is fundamentally connected to soil, air and water, and proper agricultural practices can contribute positively to each of these attributes.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Policies and definitions in the new 2014 Provincial Policy Statement safeguard and encourage agricultural feasibility of rural economies by:
 - permitting more on-farm diversified uses, such as agri-tourism;
 - providing more flexibility for agriculture-related uses and
 - protecting and promoting agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and normal farm practices in accordance with provincial standards (policy 1.1.5.8).

Halton Region case study

- Halton Region has developed a Rural Agricultural Strategy; other regions and counties have also developed agricultural strategies. The goals of the Strategy are to encourage viable farm succession, a healthy rural economy, successful agri-tourism and opportunities for supplemental income for farmers.
- The specific initiatives to make these goals possible include permitting small business operations, rural services to support farming and economic strategies specifically geared at farms and agriculture as well as agri-tourism strategies and the promotion of local food and unique crops.

Township of Scugog case study

- The Township of Scugog has a comprehensive zoning by-law that allows for home occupations and home industries.
- These industries are meant to serve the surrounding farm community and could include: small welding shops, woodworking businesses and bed and breakfasts as well as other home occupations.
- These home industries are considered small business incubators, which could move into larger employment areas in the future.



Action Nine - Cultural Strategies and Revitalization

Why are cultural strategies and revitalization important?

- Cultural strategies and revitalization have the ability to contribute to improvements to the social fabric of communities and human health and well-being as well as the sustainability of a space.
- They can build and maintain public places that foster community and social development.
- The recognition of history and importance of place can be tied into historic preservation initiatives.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Cultural resources play a key role in enhancing quality of place and enhancing local creative economies. Municipal cultural planning is a tool for weighing these assets and increasing success in a local creative economy.
- Historic preservation and the creation of low-income housing can be used in conjunction to contribute to the revitalization of communities. Continued investment in heritage buildings through restoration and repair for affordable housing purposes and stabilization of historic districts through the construction of infill housing should be acknowledged as contributing to civic beautification and retention in small communities.

Municipality of Trent Hills case study

- Cultural initiatives, heritage and revitalization are all important and successful elements in the Municipality of Trent Hills.
- There are a variety of festivals that occur in the community of Trent Hills; these include the lilac festival, maple syrup festival and waterfront festival.
- These cultural and heritage elements have a strong link to economic development; the community is able to use culture to attract people to their community.

Bruce County case study

- The County of Bruce has established 'Spruce the Bruce', which is a downtown improvement program. The program is focused on revitalizing and redefining the identity of individual downtown centres; it also provides organizational support and grants. Spruce the Bruce helps to enhance the built form of communities through restoration and design and also helps individual towns by developing a new community vision. Please see: Spruce the Bruce.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Recognize the importance of built heritage resources such as downtowns and villages. Many municipalities have been successful with this through community improvement plans, business improvement associations and local fundraising. This gives rural downtowns the opportunity to become vibrant and healthy economic development areas. Please see: Downtown Grimsby Community Improvement Plan.
2. Promote local events and festivals. The arts contribute to community well-being, volunteering and economic opportunities and have been shown to improve the health of residents. This could include promoting local theatre, local arts and crafts festivals and downtown activities such as outdoor markets. See for example: Blyth Festival Canadian Theatre, Dragon's Den in Meaford Event and Study on the Benefits of Performing Arts.
3. Tips from practitioners:
 - Identify what makes your community unique and build on this.
 - Discover initiatives that citizens will get excited about and support.
 - Downtowns and cultural events have a connection to community economic development, tourism, employment and services. Cultural Master Plans can help communities in building their cultural assets.Please see:
 - Township of Wellington North Municipal Cultural Plan
 - Haliburton County Community Co-operative.

Other resources

- Canadian Institute of Planners - CIP (2012) Healthy Communities Practice Guide.
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport (2014) Ontario Heritage Tool Kit.

Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit



Cultural Strategies and Revitalization:

Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?

Action Thirteen - Climate Change

Why is climate change important?

- It is now well recognized that climate change affects rural economies, the built environment and the natural environment. These impacts are hard to predict, but all facets of life will be affected. It is anticipated that both long-term and short-term alterations to land, air and water conditions will occur.
- The severity of storm events, including extreme heat events, is one of the most immediate impacts to rural areas that require consideration. Depending on location, these events can result in wind and water damage impacts. Various increased hazards to property damage and human injury and loss of life can occur associated with tornadoes, ice storms, flooding and wild fires.
- Climate change is a big picture issue; however, local rural community leaders can assist in acting locally to mitigate and adapt to climate change conditions.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- There are various Ontario initiatives that provide guidance on climate change. These initiatives look at longer-term climate change mitigation measures (for example, actions that reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions or permit ecosystem carbon sequestration) as well as shorter-term adaptation efforts (for example, plan for increased contingency hazard conditions) and planning for extreme heat events.
- Some locales of the province are taking this topic more seriously than others. Efforts can come from the bottom up (such as transition towns) and from the top down (for example, municipal energy conservation plans, conservation authority watershed plans, climate change adaptation plans and community vulnerability assessments).
- Efforts to build resiliency into local community conditions can be guided through various publications available to the Ontario condition (see resources).

Town of Orangeville case study

- The Town of Orangeville has an environmentally focused by-law which provides development incentives to deliver environmental features in higher density infill buildings in the community.
- Incentives are in the form of development fee waivers to provide green features in a development site; examples include bio-swales, geothermal energy systems, grey-water reuse, green roofs, infiltration gardens, naturalized landscaping and LEED construction standards. All of these actions could contribute positively to the issue of climate change.

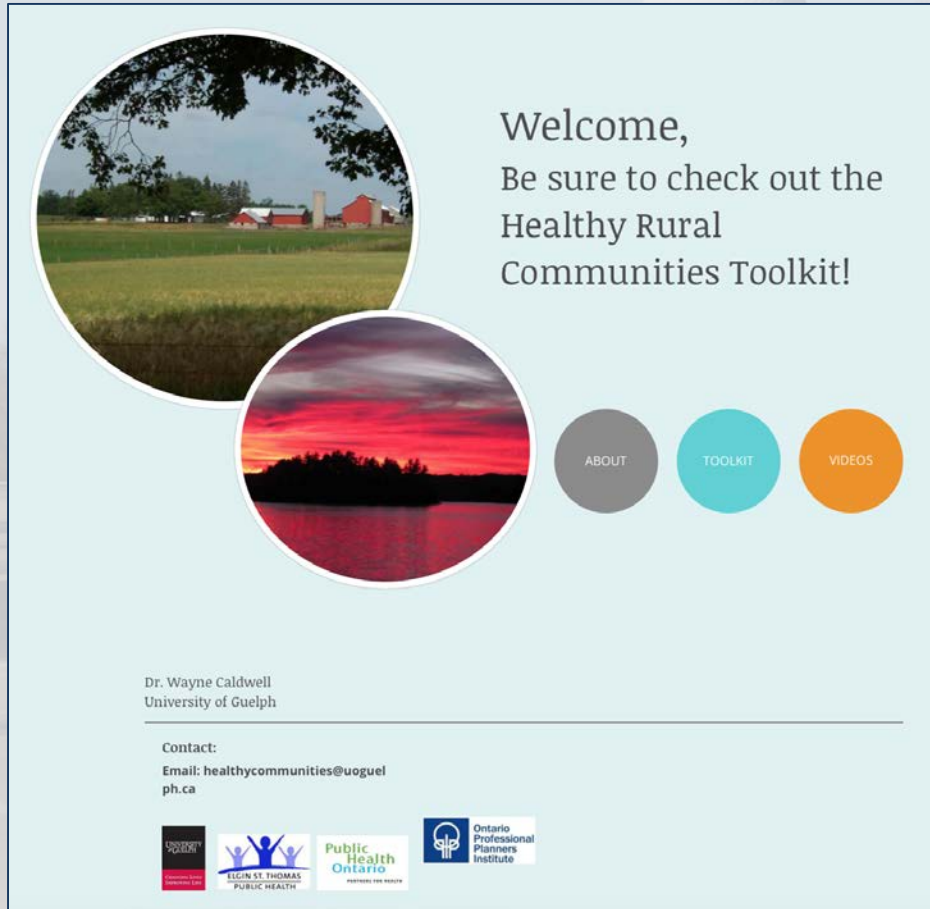


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Climate Change:

Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?

Project Website and Next Steps

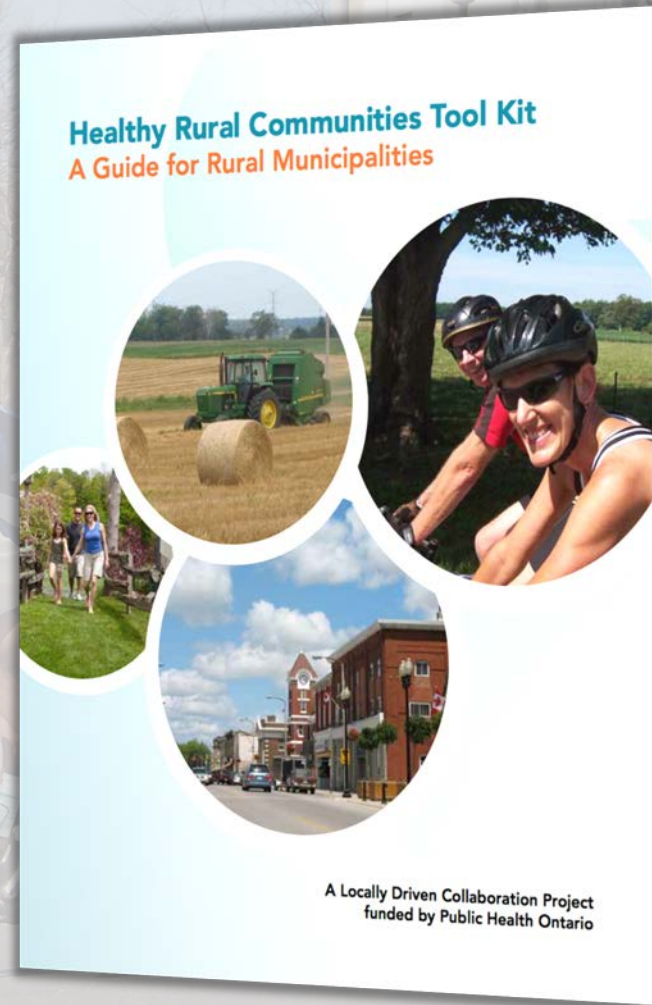


- Knowledge Translation and Transfer: on-going

www.ruralhealthycommunities.ca

Your stories...

- As part of our on-going research and outreach we hope to capture (on video) short success stories from across the province
- We are looking for innovative / successful projects that advance healthy rural communities (these will be profiled on our websites)
- Jenn and Taylor are all set up to record your stories



Questions?

Further Information:

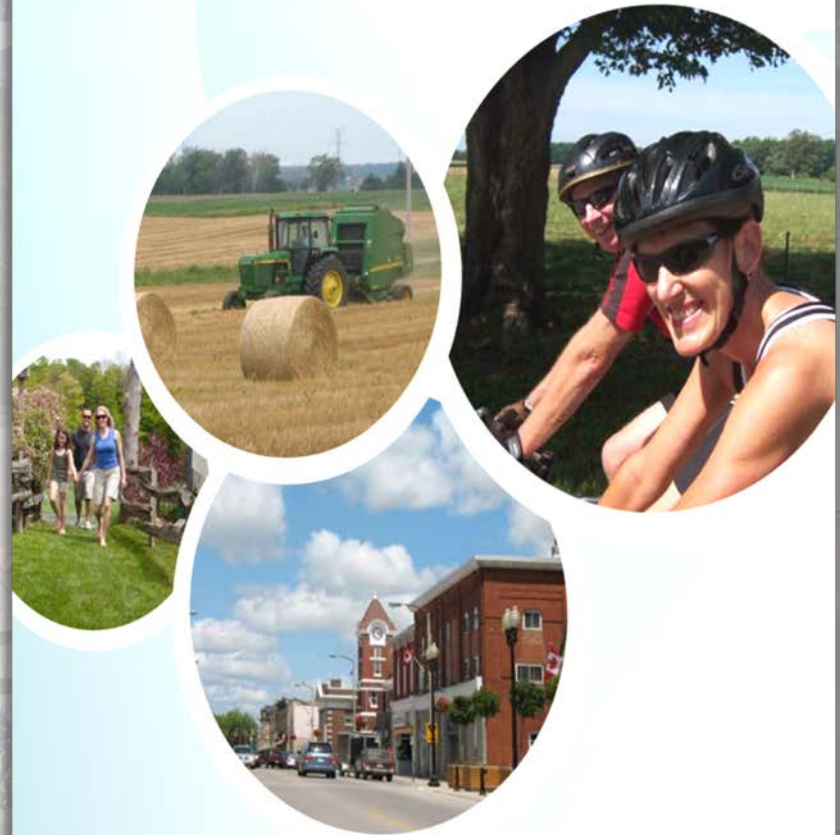
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Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit A Guide for Rural Municipalities



A Locally Driven Collaboration Project
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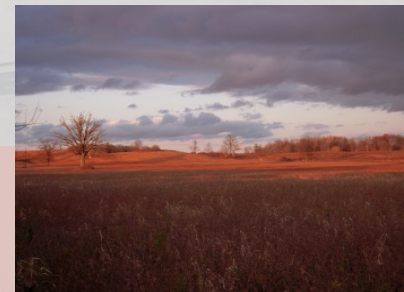
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- The following 2 slides are optional (time dependent)



Tool Kit – '10 Key Things to Do'

- 1. Planning Policy for individual towns and hamlets.*
- 2. Create understanding of relationship between planning and health, social, and environmental benefits.*
- 3. Measure impact and change of a planning initiative or practice on a community.*
- 4. Encourage partnerships between municipalities and community groups.*
- 5. Encourage collaboration between the municipality and health unit.*



Tool Kit – '10 Key Things' (con't)

6. *Develop safe spaces for dialogue and opportunities for community members to contribute.*
7. *Have council and senior staff buy-in.*
8. *Have champions for projects.*
9. *Have a committee or community-based group to whom the initiative is important.*
10. *Focus on something manageable.*

