

## **REPORT: TRANSPORTATION & FOOD MEETING**

# Tantramar 2040: Transportation & Food Meeting

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## **1.0 Introduction of Tantrammar 2040**

### ***Purpose***

Tantrammar 2040 is an initiative to work toward a sustainable future that considers environmental, economic, and social/cultural challenges and opportunities. Partnering communities include the Town of Sackville, and Villages of Dorchester, Memramcook and Port Elgin. This process will build on local initiatives and focus on common topics that can be best addressed as a region.

### ***Background***

EOS Eco-Energy co-hosted the *Adaptation & Actions Conference* in March of 2009. The conference was a success with over 100 participants and representation from 15 municipalities in Atlantic Canada. During the final discussion, participants identified the need to develop sustainability plans within municipalities and at the regional level. As a result, EOS submitted proposals to its member municipalities to develop a regional sustainability plan. The Town of Sackville and the Villages of Dorchester, Memramcook, and Port Elgin agreed to work collaboratively on a sustainability plan for the Tantrammar region. EOS is coordinating the Tantrammar 2040 initiative, in partnership with the Tantrammar Planning District Commission.

### ***Funding***

EOS Eco-Energy has received funding from the Rural Secretariat and the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund to coordinate the Tantrammar 2040 initiative.

## **1.1 Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee was struck to ensure that a quality ICSP representing community interests is produced as required to meet funding deadlines. Members of the Steering Committee report to their respective Councils, associations or organizations, and represent the following entities:

- Town of Sackville
- Village of Memramcook
- Village of Port Elgin
- Village of Dorchester
- Fort Folly First Nation
- Local Service Districts
- Greater Sackville Chamber of Commerce
- Enterprise South East
- Tantrammar Planning District Commission
- Beaubassin Planning Commission
- EOS Eco-Energy

## 1.2 Mission Statement

The Steering Committee crafted a mission statement to reflect the Tantramar 2040 process.

*“Tantramar 2040 will gather the resources and imaginations of its communities to plan and take action on sustainability, ensuring the region’s collective environmental, economic, and socio-cultural wellbeing.”*

## 2.0 Third Round of Meetings

The purpose of the third series of meetings is to provide input in the development of an action plan for the region. There are four meetings that are being held throughout February and March to discuss action planning for the priority topics: food, local business development, energy, social supports, water, bioregional planning, infrastructure, and transportation. Each of the action planning sessions will be held in a different community to accommodate participation from members of each community and the rural areas.

The Tantramar 2040 Steering Committee decided to offset some of the carbon produced as a result of these meetings by purchasing trees to be planted in communities in the Tantramar region. Renaissance Sackville has agreed to donate trees (native species) matching the amount of money raised to offset carbon (ie, if Tantramar 2040 raises \$100 towards the purchase of trees, \$200 worth of trees will be donated to communities).

### 2.1 Marketing

The workshop was open to the public, and invitations were distributed to individuals with knowledge or a keen interest in key areas of sustainability. A poster advertisement and an article in the Sackville Tribune highlighted the opportunity for public involvement in the upcoming meetings. Advertisements were posted on the Tantramar 2040 website, New Brunswick Environmental Network website, Memramcook website, Town of Sackville online events calendar, Dorchester newsletter, and Le Lien newsletter in Memramcook. An email was also sent for distribution to various networks.

### 2.2 Process

In the third round of meetings, coordinators have invited guest speakers to give brief presentations on the topic(s) for the evening. Following the presentation, a series of questions have been developed to help guide the discussion toward creating the action plan for the topic.

## 3.0 Transportation and Food Discussion

The *Transportation and Food* meeting was held at the Tantramar Veteran’s Memorial Civic Centre in Sackville, NB. This meeting raised \$6.90 for carbon offsets.

Twenty-two participants attended the meeting.

### 3.1 Transportation Discussion Notes

Mr. Georges Le Roc, President of Eastlink Door-to-Door ShuttleExpress Inc., gave a presentation about his experience with the new shuttle between Moncton and Shediac.

Facilitators asked the following questions, based on feedback during previous workshops:

1. *What is being done in other communities?*
2. *Can we develop a business case for a regional shuttle system?*
3. *What scenario might work (privately run or as a social enterprise)?*

The following notes highlight points from the whole group discussion following Mr. Le Roc's presentation:

- There exists informal arrangements for carpooling, but there is no formal service. Sackville has parking spaces set aside for carpoolers at the Visitors Centre but they are not used on a regular basis (are they marked?).
- There is a St. Andrews charter bus service to St. Stephen & Saint John.
- There may be a potential for one-stop demand (i.e., airport shuttles).
- Specialty bus services (i.e., shuttles for persons with disabilities, church shuttle)
- Given the issues like sustainability and peak oil, communities should consider approaching the provincial government for support for regional systems.
- There may be opportunities to partner among communities and with the private sector.
- Using a social enterprise model may be the best way to fund it (not a for-profit venture).
- To build ridership, the shuttle service needs to advertise constantly using a variety of media such as local newspapers, billboards. However, word-of-mouth is most effective.
- Also, getting key employers on board to challenge their employees to participate will help build ridership.
- Park & Ride system seems most doable (as opposed to a bus route with at home pick-ups).
- Include amenities on buses as incentives (bike racks, high speed wireless internet, etc.)
- Deterrent for use - social issues surrounding employment situations (i.e., inconsistent work hours, inconvenience, location of pick-up, lack of shelters at pick-up locations)
- A significant amount of community support is needed to realize a common transportation system - this would include the business community (i.e., employers) who may have to create flexible work schedules to accommodate transit options.
- It was recommended that a shuttle system customize services to consumer needs.
- Rising fuel prices will cause a crisis, and ultimately, action (potential to develop a social marketing campaign based on this scenario). However, is this reactive approach the best way to address the issue?
- Parking issues can be addressed through transit opportunities.
- In planning for this use, consider incentives to accommodate perceived inconveniences
- There are benefits and draw-backs of using either a public or private service
- Tax-based incentives are available for use of public transit services.

### 3.2 Food Discussion Notes

Emily Phillips, Katy Best, and Marc Leger are students from Mount Allison University who took part in a Geography of Food course with Dr. Brad Walters in the fall 2010. They provided information on fair-trade and the food atlas being developed in partnership with the Fundy Biosphere Reserve. Fair-trade is when consumers in developed countries purchase items (crafts, coffee,

sugar, etc.) at a slightly higher price from producers to meet higher social and environmental standards.

The Food Atlas, is a project initiated through the United Way and Fundy Biosphere Reserve that has mapped the location of food producers in the region. The secondary goal of this Atlas is to map locations where locally-produced foods can be purchased and aims to join producers with distributors, consumers, restaurateurs, grocery stores, etc.

Facilitators asked the following questions:

1. *What can we do to work toward regional food security?*
2. *What can we do to get people to value food?*
3. *What are some strategies to encourage eating whole foods?*
4. *How can consumers and producers work together to support the local food industry?*
5. *What kinds of supports are necessary to make this happen?*

The following notes highlight points from the discussion session:

- Regional food security can only exist if we understand the food system. Education (for all ages) is important.
- At the very basics, to learn to value food, we need to provide people with information where they buy their food. Are there opportunities to partner with some of the major players on food initiatives (i.e., SuperStore, Sobeys, etc.)?
- Rising price of fossil fuels will mean a shift towards a local food diet & learning how to preserve local foods.
- Unfortunately, sometimes it takes a crisis for us to value things— even food (consider it more because of personal health concerns).
- A crisis will create a need for action, but will a crisis be too late (who will know how to grow food when we have an aging population of farmers?)
- We should focus on the education system: working with schools in terms of learning about Canada's Food Guide
- "You are what you eat": learning how to read labels, what exactly are we eating? Do we know?
- Education around where our food comes from and how it is grown (using cheap labour? banned chemicals? etc.) would make a difference in our spending patterns.
- More transparency and education surrounding ingredients and actual costs is also needed.
- Need for roles to support farmers and consumers (i.e., marketing) - we can't expect the farmers to grow food for us and then have to talk us into eating it instead of imported, processed goods.
- Establish a variety of Community Supported Agriculture groups (i.e., a bread CSA)
- Establish an educational farm that schools can visit and help work.
- Addressing seasonal issues (i.e., freezing and preserving)
- Promoting local & selling local: portion sizes (not bulk)
- Build on existing skills and knowledge in the region about growing, harvesting, consuming and preserving local foods.
- Integrate local food into school lunches and culinary classes at schools.
- Develop a skills inventory in the region in terms of food production, processing, preserving, and preparing.
- There was a recognized need to renew government's involvement in food issues at every level.

What can we do?

- Cultural food circuit: promote through municipalities, healthy high-end foods
- Get restaurants involved: tourism angle (history, culture, value)
- Community cooperation and communication- making these connections
- Addressing issues with regulations

- Support farmer's markets - which are economically, socially, and health-wise, a good investment for any community
- Make farming economically viable through trading (i.e., food for services)
- Economic models, like cooperatives, are a way to start a community-centered initiative.
- In the New England States, they have been so successful in encouraging young farmers to establish, they are running out of farmland. These new farmers do not bother with the significant investment in land, but instead lease land in exchange for food (commonly done in other countries)

#### 4.0 Next Steps

Discussions from the *action planning* meetings being held throughout February and March will help guide the sustainability plan for the Tantramar region. At the end of the process, there will be a set of actions and potential partners to take collaborative action on the priority topics. Also, we are planning a final workshop - **From Planning to Action** - on Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup> to help address the gap between developing a sustainability plan and implementing it.