

To pave or not to pave: Cycling enthusiast wants asphalt to be used on trail rather than crusher-dust

By KRISTEN LIPSCOMBE Staff Reporter
Tue. May 6 - 5:49 AM



Train tracks extend along Beaufort Avenue in Halifax. About 70 citizens attended a public meeting on Monday night to express ideas on a proposed multipurpose trail to run alongside the rail cut. (Ingrid Bulmer / Staff)

gathering about the Beaufort trail had come to a close.

Peter Rogers wants his children to grow up in a city that makes transportation both sustainable and safe.

That's why he threw his two cents in during a public meeting Monday evening at city hall, where more than 70 Halifax residents showed up to hear what municipal government staff members had to say about the future of a multi-purpose path that will weave its way through the city's south end.

Mr. Rogers, also a member of the Halifax Cycling Coalition, said a path paved with asphalt is better for bicyclists for "safety and manoeuvrability."

"I also made the point about cycling with children in tow — and not kicking up crusher-dust into their faces," he said over the phone later Monday night, after the

"A paved surface really makes much more sense for all purposes, really," he said. "I don't see how crusher-dust is any more green if it takes up the same amount of space."

While the meeting is done, the debate continues, as 260 citizens have signed a petition saying they want crusher-dust when the new pathway is put in place. They argue that pavement isn't safe because it will encourage higher speeds and isn't green because the city will take down some trees.

"The portion of the active transportation network extending from the intersection of South Street and Beaufort Avenue to Point Pleasant Park should be designed and constructed as a recreational trail and not as a transportation link," their petition reads.

"The green space in the area including the beautifully treed area along Beaufort Avenue is a precious asset to HRM and should be preserved as such," says one of the reasons listed in that petition.

While bicyclists don't back a crusher-dust alternative, jogger Nanci Lee told those in attendance at the meeting that asphalt is hard on runners.

She wasn't the only one to question the city's plans for the pathway, which was promoted in November as the first leg of an active transportation greenway that will one day stretch from the Armdale Rotary to Point Pleasant Park.

Several community members fired opinions at Coun. Sue Uteck (Northwest Arm – South End) and Peter Bigelow, the city's manager of real property planning. Although heated at times, both sides seemed willing to work together, with topics ranging from how wide the path will be to what types of trees should be preserved and what types should be eliminated.

(klipscombe@herald.ca)

COMMENTS

[POST YOUR COMMENT](#)

hlywd68 wrote:

Yeah that's great, put a bunch of pavement down on a path for the South-enders instead of on the roads, great plan, really using your head. Hopefully smarter head will prevail, but I'm not holding my breath. This guy has no respect for anyone other than the one's that own bikes. If pavement is put down it will not be safe to be a runner with the increased speeds. Think of the community as a whole buddy instead of just your cycling club.

Guy wrote:

I don't care what they use... I'm just happy this is actually going to happen. I didn't think it would ever happen.

Nobody wrote:

People with disabilities will benefit from the asphalt too, making it useable by wheelchairs and scooters. Crusher dust will not. Seems like a simple question to me. Pave it.

annmarie wrote:

What happens when the path turns into a pothole ridden area? Will the path be fixed before the actual potholes in the roads or the so-called transportation link? Crusher dust would be much better environmentally.

dartguy25 wrote:

how about no pavement and no crusher dust, how about leaving the tracks there so when this city realizes they need railroad for transport they will still have it!

FredinNS wrote:

I wanted to add that potholes would not be a big issue if they laid asphalt on the trail. The reason for potholes on roads is due to the heavy loads on them from transport trucks followed by the constant barrage of cars that turn it from a crack to crumbled asphalt and then to a hole. So unless heavy vehicles drive on this trail, there won't be any potholes. This will however be poorly laid with an improper base (poor drainage) and there will be

heaving in the winter months. This will produce cracks running across the path and lumps here and there.

dsydney wrote:

crusher dust more environmentally friendly? Its dust. What if its crushed up slag or coke?

wsavary wrote:

Anyone who regularly walks in Point Pleasant Park will appreciate that a crusher dust trail is unusable for much of the winter due to the fact it holds water, slush and ice much longer than asphalt.

CapeHalifax wrote:

Traditionally Nova Scotia Tory governments ignore road repair in the province. Thousand of visitots using the beautifully scenic route 223 from the TransCanada to Iona, Cape Breton to get the Highland Village Museum and Concert complex know all too well to their regret. So paving this wide path would not be your best option for sustainability in the long run. With crusher dust, the cost should be within Peter's means.

windsor_alleycat wrote:

Crusher dust is an excellent alternative. It compacts very well almost to a cement-like state. There would be no problem for someone with disabilities to maneuver a wheelchair or scooter. This is not class A gravel we're talking about people. for the bikers... get a damn mountain bike! Deem it a nature trail, not a bike hiway!

© 2008 The Halifax Herald Limited