

## **Group hopes meeting tonight will pave way for crusher dust trail**

By AMY PUGSLEY FRASER City Hall Reporter  
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The experience of a south-end Halifax neighbourhood with a proposed multi-purpose path is not exactly ending up like Happy Trails.

The Beaufort Trail – a path partnering the street's route from South Street to Roxton Road – was unveiled at city hall last November.

At the time, it was heralded as the first leg of an active transportation greenway that will someday stretch from the Armdale Rotary to Point Pleasant Park.

Much was made of its seven years in planning and the \$880,000 in promised funding from three governments to take the design from paper to reality.

However, for many residents along the route, the unveiling also proved to be a real eye-opener. "The meeting that day twigged it," Beaufort Avenue resident Harry Thompson said in a recent interview.

He said he was surprised that the city planned to remove a swath of green grass and trees to accommodate a wide, asphalt-paved path.

A lot of his neighbours felt the same way, he soon discovered.

In fact, they banded together over the winter to promote a crusher-dust alternative, amassing 260 signatures to a petition in protest.

They've even met with Mayor Peter Kelly to voice their concerns.

And not only does the petition include the "decided majority" of the residents on Beaufort Avenue, Mr. Thompson stresses, it also includes people living on neighbouring streets like Belmont on the Arm, Marlborough Woods, Point Pleasant Drive, and Francklyn Street.

"So, there has been strong reaction."

The group would love a path that's about three metres wide and coated in crusher dust, he says. "We're all in favour of that."

Because of their concerns, a meeting will be held tonight at city hall to get last-minute feedback from area residents.

And while Mr. Thompson is hoping for a civilized dialogue, he's bracing himself for a "potential bloodbath."

"I can't predict what will happen tonight but we're hoping for the best."

Their biggest issue, says Mr. Thompson, is the city's lack of consultation with the host community.

"We want a trail, but clearly the majority don't want this," he says of the paved proposal.

The chairman of the Halifax Urban Greenway Association says he knows many Beaufort Avenue residents are concerned with the loss of trees and green space needed to make room for a paved path.

That's why the path has been narrowed to 3.5 metres from its original four, Mark Poirier said in an interview last week.

"We thought four metres was too wide and really, as a result of all this neighbourhood opposition, we agreed that we can reduce it."

In some places, he says, it even narrows to about three metres to save some trees.

Having a path paved means more people can use it, says Mr. Poirier.

"If it's going to be a year-round trail, if it's going to be plowed and accessible to people in wheelchairs and in-line skaters and skateboarders, it has to be asphalt because crusher dust just wouldn't do the job," he said.

Although he had hoped construction of the trail would start this spring, the tenders are on hold pending the outcome of tonight's meeting.

"We hope that any concerns will be dealt with," he said.

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## COMMENTS

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wsavary wrote:

I can surely understand that local residents would prefer a crusher dust trail over a paved trail. Pavement would allow skateboards, inline skates and various other wheeled vehicles that don't always do well on a less stable surface like crusher dust, but if you look at the condition of the crusher dust trails in Point Pleasant Park, they are unusable for many weeks of the year. They retain water and stay icy for a long time. Maybe the local residents are banded together because this is in fact what they want; to make the trail less usable. In any event, a crusher dust trail is grossly inferior to an asphalt trail.

jlorig wrote:

A crusher dust trail is not 'grossly inferior' to an asphalt trail, it simply requires regular maintenance. The difference in the cost of constructing an asphalt trail versus a crusher

dust trail is counterbalanced by the cost of the additional maintenance it requires (annual resurfacing and grading to shed water). A 3.5m wide paved 'trail' sounds more like a single lane road to me, and seems a bit excessive for the intended use: pedestrian traffic. If the intention is to create a trail system that leads to Point Pleasant Park, then would make sense to use the same material as is used all through the park. Imagine how ridiculous it would be to have paved trails through Point Pleasant Park, the juxtaposition of a paved street through a forest. It's rather distasteful, disrespectful to the nature of the place. I suspect that is how the residents must feel about this proposal.

CapeHalifax wrote:

Is the issue the media used on the trail or the trail itself ?

mejp wrote:

The intended uses for the Halifax Urban Greenway are much more than just pedestrian traffic. It will accommodate wheelchairs, bicycles, baby strollers, inline skaters, skateboarders and electric mobility scooters. It is not just a path to Point Pleasant Park; rather, it will connect to the regional trails system stretching from Hubbards and beyond in the west to the Musquodoboit Valley and beyond in the east. It will be a key link in the Trans-Canada Trail and the central spine of a system of bicycle routes throughout peninsular Halifax. It will provide an alternative transportation opportunity for all ages and levels of mobility, as well as for those concerned about energy cost and availability, climate change and declining levels of physical activity.

zippo2468 wrote:

it does not matter what the local governments try to do, there will be a ton of whining. I really am starting to believe HRM capital of Canada when it comes to whining even worse than Toronto.

MarkyMark wrote:

To the trail promoters and government:

Adopt the KISS principle and use crusher dust for a narrower 4 ft wide non-motorized bicycle/pedestrian trail but grade it and design bridges, etc. for future paving.

IF the trail proves popular in the coming years AND global oil prices fall, which will result in lower liquid asphalt prices, THEN pave parts of it as you see fit.

The last thing we need in this world is more asphalt.

PS If you're talking to the premier, tell him not to put asphalt down below in the cut beside the tracks. Put the second track back in and increase rail traffic. Don't put a road in for trucks - that's regressive thinking.

SUMPIN2SAY wrote:

I CANT WAIT ,I THINK I WILL GO GET A NEW SKATEBOARD. WHAT A BUNCH OF WHINERS .PAVE IT AS PLANNED END OF STORY.

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