

Residents favour narrower trails

By AMY PUGSLEY FRASER City Hall Reporter

Thu. Nov 20 - 4:47 AM

South-end homeowners have changed their minds about a paved trail running above the railway line in their neighbourhood, says the area councillor.

Earlier this year, people living around Beaufort Avenue submitted a 260-name petition to city hall asking for changes to the Beaufort Trail.

They wanted the trail, which will wind from South Street to Roxton Road in the city right-of-way, to be topped with crusher dust instead of pavement.

Their petition outlined concerns that the green space would be lost to a wide swath of asphalt. But Coun. Sue Uteck (Northwest Arm-South End) told her council colleagues at a meeting this week that city staff have worked with the community and come to an agreement.

It's time to get moving on the trail, the first of three active transportation links that will eventually join the Armdale Rotary to Point Pleasant Park.

"We want to go forward with this trail; it's been 10 years in the making," Ms. Uteck said.

A staff report written for council says that in order to preserve as many trees as possible, the street will be narrowed in places to accommodate more trail space.

In other places along the route, the trail will veer onto CN-owned land and its width will be reduced to save trees.

As a result of the changes, which involved a proposed 4.5-metre-wide cut being reduced to three and 3.5 metres, many people asked that their names be deleted from the petition, Ms. Uteck said.

National trail guidelines say routes must be paved to accommodate wheelchairs, bikes, in-line skates and skateboards.

The municipality might have lost the \$600,000 promised to the project by the province and Ottawa if the standards weren't followed.

"The trail needs to be constructed to . . . standards of at least 3.5 metres in width and finished with asphalt," says a staff report.

The city's manager of real property planning said there was talk at one point of putting the trail down in the rail cut.

"But it would be problematic in terms of getting people in and out of the cut — and costly," Peter Bigelow told council.

Instead, he said, the trail will be located on the "aprons" of the railway cut, allowing easy access.

That's a good idea, said Coun. Jennifer Watts (Connaught-Quinpool), adding that she would like to see the trail developed further into her district.

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