

“Labour of love” for Halifax’s Urban Greenway



By [Jennifer Taplin](#)



Mark Poirier, chair of the Halifax Urban Greenway Association takes a stroll down the path he helped construct over the past decade. Photo by Jennifer Taplin.

Ten years and a lot of work – all for one kilometre of asphalt.

A south-end Halifax community group is finally having an official opening for their Urban Greenway at the end of this month.

“The one kilometre we thought was important because it had been threatened with subdivisions and development,” said Mark Poirier, chair of the Halifax Urban Greenway Association.

“It’s a fact on the ground now so it’s only just the first piece of something that’s supposed to go through the entire city.”

The long-term plan is for this trail to connect with the Chain of Lakes trail on one end then push through Saint Mary’s University and finish at Point Pleasant Park.

“I think we finally have something that can be shown as this is the beginning now lets move forward on either end,” Poirier said, adding the connections are probably a decade or more away since it’s expensive, and have to go along the rail cut requiring crossings under bridges.

But the finished, one-kilometre stretch is now a heavily used trail along the rail cut near Beaufort Avenue from South Street to Bellevue Avenue.

“This trail was the vision and the dream of several residents in and around the south end,” said Coun. Sue Uteck.

“This project started around 2002 so it’s a 10-year labour of love.”

The trail has actually been open for close to two years, but since federal infrastructure money was involved, they had to wait for a federal official to be available for the ceremony. The entire project cost \$880,000, with HRM chipping in \$280,000, and the province and the feds providing the rest.

Over the years, getting CN Rail and the neighbourhood on board was no easy task.

“It was a battle with CN but it was also a battle with the neighbours who had never seen or experienced an urban trail and thought we were going to destroy Beaufort Avenue,” Uteck said.

Poirier said once the neighbours were given a tree-by-tree accounting of what would happen to make the trail, they came around.

“Now you talk to people who were in opposition and they say ‘we think everything turned out well when we thought everything would be clearcut,’” he said.