



October 29, 2007

Re: CN Rail Line B Joseph Howe Drive to Lakeside

On July 9th, I wrote to inform you that CN has applied to discontinue use of the rail line near your home. I am writing now with an update.

In my last letter, I told you that CN must follow a 5-step legal process whenever they wish to abandon a section of rail line. The process is laid out in the *Canada Transportation Act* and is supervised by the Canadian Transportation Agency.

Steps 1, 2 and 3 are now complete. Step 1 was to publish a three-year abandonment plan. That was done last year. Step 2 was to advertise the line for sale to anyone who wanted to continue rail operations. As expected, nobody responded to that advertisement. Step 3, which was to negotiate a price with anyone who responded to Step 2, was unnecessary.

Step 4 of the process is for CN to offer to sell the line to the federal government, the provincial government, the urban transit authority, and the municipal government. CN has been in a position to take this step since the end of August. I was told in September that CN would send the letter of offer when some of their people returned from summer vacation. But as of the date of this letter, CN has not sent the letter of offer.

Once CN sends the letter B and that could happen any day B the federal government has 30 days to respond, the provincial government has 60 days, Metro Transit has 90 days, and HRM has 120 days. (This process is slightly different than the one described in my July 9th letter, and is the result of very recent amendments to the *Canada Transportation Act*.)

The provincial and municipal governments are aware that the offer is coming, and I know there have been some preliminary, internal discussions about what they might do. However, I do not believe they will truly focus on the issue until the letter of offer from CN is actually received, and the clock starts ticking on their response. I have been assured that the municipality will sponsor at least one public meeting, as part of their response, once the formal letter of offer is received.

After I sent out my July 9th letter, I had quite a few responses. Most people were excited by the idea of a recreational trail connecting all the way out to St. Margaret's Bay. Naturally there were some questions about how exactly such a trail might work.

I have also been in touch with the Beechville-Lakeside-Timberlea (BLT) rails-to-trails group, which is a model of community management of an abandoned rail line. In fact, our local rail line will connect directly to the BLT trail. If you would like to see what this kind of trail can look like, and how it is managed, I encourage you to visit their website (www.bltrails.ca), which has maps and pictures. Of course you can also walk or bike the BLT trail itself.

I will continue to keep you informed of developments as the process unfolds, both by letters like this one and on my website (www.grahamsteele.ca) I will send out another letter as soon as CN sends out its letter of offer to the governments.

Yours sincerely,

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