



January 14, 2008

Re: CN Rail Line B Joseph Howe Drive to Lakeside

On July 9th and October 29th, I wrote to inform you that CN has applied to discontinue use of the rail line near your home.

The abandonment process has now reached a crucial stage.

On November 1, 2007, CN issued its formal notice of abandonment to the three levels of government. The federal and provincial governments have formally notified CN that they do not wish to buy the line. Now HRM has a deadline of March 6, 2008, to tell CN whether it wishes to buy the line. The purchase price is \$3.6 million.

The provincial government and HRM have known for a while that CN's formal notice would be coming, so they have been working together to develop a plan. They would like to turn the line into an Active Transportation Corridor®, connecting to the Beechville-Lakeside-Timberlea trail (www.bltrails.ca). An Active Transportation Corridor® would provide an opportunity for people to walk, jog, bike or rollerblade. It would also be wheelchair accessible. Motorized vehicles would not be permitted.

HRM has issued a Request for Proposals for a consultant to develop a functional plan and to hold public meetings. (The Request for Proposals with the consultant's terms of reference is #07-456 and can be viewed on the HRM website.) The competition closed on January 10th, so I do not yet know to whom the contract has been awarded.



Public meetings will of course be held before HRM Council makes a decision. As I have mentioned, the HRM deadline is March 6, 2008. We can therefore expect the public meetings to be held sometime in February. Once I know the time and place of the meetings, I will send out another letter. These public meetings will provide an important opportunity for you to find out what HRM has in mind, to have all of your questions answered, and to provide input into the planning process.

After my first two letters about the CN rail line, the overwhelming response has been excitement about the possibility that the line could be converted to a recreational trail. Now we need to ensure that HRM Council hears the message that this opportunity is worth the investment. The purchase price of \$3.6 million is a lot of money, and Council needs to know that the community is behind the proposal.

I am therefore encouraging you to attend the public meetings when they are held. I will also be working with interested people in your community to generate a petition of support, both on paper and on the Internet. It will be helpful if all HRM Councillors, and your own Councillor in particular, are aware of the community's support for the proposal.

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). Please call or write with any comments or questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Steele, MLA
Halifax Fairview

