

## **Introduction to a Draft Trail Master Plan**

**February 16, 2016**

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcoming remarks.
2. Introduction of the panel members.
3. Review the keys points of the proposed trail.
4. Review the rationale for trail construction.
5. Introduction of the map with noted correction.
6. Questions /answers and comments.
7. Closing remarks.

## Introduction of Trail Concept Plan: Key Points

- The Town has an opportunity to develop trails in areas where new subdivisions are proposed.
- It is the intention to connect key features such as: School, church, ponds, wetlands, rivers and green spaces.
- The proposed red coloured trail line is only a CONCEPT and is subject to revisions and discussions with landowners and developers.
- The Town has requested your input and feedback so that we can develop a trail that meets the needs of all users.
- The trail costs for the most part will be borne by the land developers and the construction of the trails will be phased in to coincide with timing of individual subdivision construction.
- The Town would like to connect other areas of the Town to the trail system and this can be accomplished via river trails, trunk lines etc.

## WHY DEVELOP TRAILS?

- Trails are well suited to Canadians when it comes to their personal health. Environmental quality and fitness are the two most important factors influencing Canadian lifestyle choices.
- Among the 10 most popular fitness activities are walking, biking and jogging, all of which are well suited to the outdoor trails.
- Trails can link historic and cultural sites, and open opportunities for cultural and historic community events.
- One of the key recommendations that was derived from the Town's Recreation Master Plan is the development of community walking and bicycle trails.
- Providing a safe area for walkers was also a key point taken from previous Town strategic planning sessions. (No sidewalks, narrow shoulders and increased traffic are concerning for pedestrians).
- Trails are not limited to the rich and famous; they are accessible to all income brackets and all age groups and provide great social interaction. Can you go for a walk without saying hello? Even without intention, we meet and greet others we pass on trails.
- Trail usage is not limited to one season, for example, one can walk year round and snow shoe in the winter.

## Introduction to a Draft Trail Master Plan

### Public Briefing Report

February 16, 2016

Panel attendance: Mayor John Kennedy, Deputy Mayor John Kennedy, Adele Carruthers, Town Manager, and Addison Bown, Chris LeMessurier and Ron Penny all from the Grand Concourse Authority.

Approximately 50 members of the public were in attendance.

The meeting began at 7:00pm with an introduction of the agenda, a review of the key points of the Trail Concept Plan and a review of the rationale for developing trails ( all attached) by the Chair of Planning and Development; Craig Dyer.

Mayor Kennedy introduced the Trail Master Plan Map (attached) and noted a correction of the red coloured proposed solid line running parallel to Soldier's Brook should have been a dotted line indicating a possible *future* trail.

There were several questions and objections regarding the proposed location of the trail. Members of the panel explained that the draft concept plan was just that, a preliminary concept plan that was fluid and the trail would move depending on agreements with property owners, developers and the Town.

There were some questions about cost of trail construction and the cost of the trail maintenance once finished. Various members of the panel addressed aspects of the question and offered the following:

The trail construction cost would vary depending on the terrain but could cost around 300-400 thousand per Kilometer. The subdivision developers would be expected to pay for the cost of construction from their required greenspace fees. The maintenance costs would be approximately 6-7 thousand per year, and maintenance would be undertaken by the Grand Course Authority staff.

There were concerns about the proposed trail and strong objections raised by several residents from the Pine Line area. It was explained that any trail finalization in developed areas such as along Soldier's Brook would be with consultation and the consent of landowners.

There were some questions about accessing the trail, extent of the trail and connection to the Grand Concourse trails in St. John's. It was explained that the intent of the proposed trail was to access the trail in the vicinity of the Ashkay Drive area and be able to travel north to Soldier's Pond area. The City of St. John's would have to be contacted to facilitate a possible connection to the Town's trails as the connecting trail would be located within the St. John's boundary. The Grand Concourse Authority indicated that the advantage of a connection to the current Grand Concourse Trail in St. John's would allow trail users within our Town to walk or bike to Quidi Vidi Lake for example, or as far away as CBS. The trails are constructed with the intent to be a network.

There were several positive comments from residents about the Trail Concept Plan. Some comments about health benefits, community building benefits and understanding that walking trails were highlighted as the number one requested recreation activity/infrastructure derived from the recently completed Recreation Master Plan.

There was a question raised about if a trail would disturb nature and how the construction of the trail would affect sensitive areas. The Grand Concourse Authority indicated that they take nature preservation very seriously and that if there was a sensitive area they would work around it or construct so that it would not disturb it. For example, they explained that during the construction of the Bidgood's Trail in Goulds there was a wetland sensitive area and they decided to construct a floating boardwalk so that it would not disturb the waterways and wetland ecosystem.

The meeting concluded with Mayor Kennedy thanking the Grand Concourse for attending as well as the residents and indicated that all written comments and concerns should be put in writing to the Town for consideration.