



Halifax rail cut should be paved, MacKay says
Project benefits would outweigh residents' concerns, minister says
By AMY PUGSLEY FRASER City Hall Reporter
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READER COMMENTS

eagle55 wrote:

Just a comment on the local councillors remarks about trucks not being environmentally friendly. There are natural gas engines available which are now required by the Port of Los Angeles for trucks using the port. The California governor visited the B.C. plant where the technology was invented. Perhaps trucks utilizing Westport Innovation's natural gas engines could also be legislated here as well if our local politicians could be educated on what is available rather than making off the cuff remarks.

BoswellsJohnson wrote:

Our incisive mayor said: "I can't see this project going ahead if there's not any prescribed benefit," he said. "If there are no benefits, why would we do it?" Guess what P-Kelley, too late! Corporations have already started planning what will happen. For instance, Cianbro Corp. wants to build a toll highway from Calais, Maine, to the Quebec-Maine border. The infrastructure is being planned, and none of us, including Mayor Pete, will have a say in the matter. The government only listens to business interests anymore. Peter Mackay is simply doing what he's been told to do. Hack.

Nobody wrote:

I could live with this, as a home-owner in the West End, provided someone actually enforces the 'No Jake Brakes' law, unlike now.

schooner1 wrote:

Is there any benefit to 95% of what is done in Halifax to help the greater HRM

walshcj wrote:

Wouldn't the obvious benefit be the lack of huge transport trucks running all thought out the down town streets ??? Give me a break , its as obvious as the nose on your face. If you work, live or drive in the down town core we all curse those trucks slowing everything down. God knows we need routes in and out of downtown desperately. We should also open it to regular traffic out bound. Where is Rodney he will open it up if council is too narrow minded again. Cheers

Masquerade wrote:

Can we please at least try to catch up with the rest of the planet and devise an economic strategy that is not rooted in the 1950's?! Truck traffic for transportation of goods is not envorinmentally friendly. Everyone else in the developed world is moving away from trucks and returning to trains. A single train can do the work of 100 trucks much quicker, cleaner, and safely. Instead of paving this rail cut, the government should be working with CN to put the second rail line back in place! But what was I thinking? HRM exists solely for the purpose of construsting Peter Kelly's pet projects.

Gooz wrote:

i absolutely agree local homeowners should foot the bill for this. South end Halifax residents are the richest people east of Montreal. Tax the Rich, not the poor.

haliguy wrote:

Its good to see that this project is moving forward and is getting the political attention it needs. This project needs to be done.

Dak wrote:

This is a great idea, and they should include a paved lane for bike and foot traffic. As for Sue Uteck's suggestion that it isn't "clean and green" ... that comment makes no sense. The trucks are travelling to the terminals and downtown anyway, so they won't make more exhaust on the rail cut corridor. In fact, it will increase the speed at which they can get downtown so they will be spewing exhaust for a shorter period of time, so it would probably be "cleaner and greener"!

FredinNS wrote:

"I can't see this project going ahead if there's not any prescribed benefit," Kelly said. "If there are no benefits, why would we do it?" Shouldn't this logic be applied to the "fast ferry"? A 30 Million project, fares of \$5-7 per trip, only servicing a minority of people... I don't see this as a "prescribed benefit", only a money pit for the taxpayer.

We Need to Progress wrote:

It looks like our politicians are finally starting to listen to the voters who pay their salaries. Good to have you back Mr. MacKay!

gordo2 wrote:

Pave it. Get the big rigs out of downtown Halifax. Spend some time on Lower Water Street and tell me how many big trucks come by midday. Sorry if the pampered set in the South End don't want it. Guess what, the rest of the folks on the peninsula have been dealing with the costs of traffic progress for a while now ie Robie Street, the Chebucto widening fiasco, perhaps it's time for the South End to take one for the team.....

AlteredState wrote:

Why are we still talking about improving access for trucks to the ports when rail is a more efficient way of moving cargo? Why are we not talking about, or more importantly doing something about, building a hub inland where trucks can go to get the locally delivered cargo? Having trucks deliver the local cargo from this hub and moving the long distance cargo inland by rail makes much more sense to me. It would cut down on the number of trucks on our highways and remove so much of their pollution from the air that it really could help us in so many ways.

mwmentor wrote:

What a Crock! This is yet another White Elephant project that will waste way too much of the Taxpayers dollar and accomplish nothing. Halifax as a Port of Entry/Exit to/from the North American Market faces 2 very real Problems that limit it's ability to compete with other Ports. 1/ Distance and thus Time from the intended Market/Source to the Port. Example if Ontario is the Market or Source location Halifax Can't compete with Montreal. 2/ A very large chunk of Business done through Halifax has disappeared as a result of Tighter Restrictions at the US Canada Border. Halifax is No longer a Viable port of Entry to the US Market. Time is Money and Both above reasons add to the cost when moving goods through Halifax. Unless this can be fixed a better Truck Route is Icing for a Cake that you can't bake. to further Complicate this did anybody pay attention to the rest of the US Election results? Not just the fact that Obama will be the first Black US President. The Democrats now control both houses and the Presidency. The Democrats are known for Protectionist Legislation which favours US industries over all others. They will make it harder for Halifax to compete not easier. Finally Barack Obama wants to reopen and renegotiate NAFTA. Is anybody reading the Herald foolish enough to Believe he wants a better Deal for Canada and Mexico than the US? People around the World point to Obamas election as a sign of a New Age. Drive! He is 1 man and must toe the Line.

GFrancis wrote:

The rial cut should be used for expanded and improved rail transport, it should not be paved. The rest of the world is moving towards greater rail usage, while we are moving away from it. I guess it's old backwards thinking here in Nova Scotia, it's almost like we're always implementing the solutions of 20 years ago today.

CapeHalifax wrote:

First thing we gotta do is get rid of CN Rail. Then from the fright revenues put a second rail line in there out to a truck park on the outskirts of the city. The engines should be converted to electric and the city take over the generation of power within the HRM. Pretty certain we'll all be rolling in royalty cheques and living on easy street next to the Mayor.

Guy wrote:

Worried about the noise from trucks and trains in the cut? Here's a simple (but probably 10X more costly) solution... instead of paving it, install concrete box sections and cover it! Make it a tunnel!!! The reclaimed land on top would be parkland with maybe a few key developments to offset the cost.

annmarie wrote:

What does MacKay know anyway about this area? Does he live here, will this effect him and his family, will their land be confiscated?? You would think that people who have seen how a global economy worked and fell like dominoes in the stock market that they would think twice before entwining other parts of the economy together with other provinces without, like Sue says, a Business Plan. When you call something the Atlantic Gateway, who or what provinces exactly would be responsible for the regulations and profits of this endeavour? Where is the Business Plan or will they play it by ear until someone wises up and tons of taxpayer funds are gone to a select few??
mwmentor: Canada and US trade was just fine before NAFTA came into being. Mexico is the winner out of the three with numerous employers and jobs leaving here and ending up there, Hershey, etc. It is a bad agreement for Canada and the US. We are still being ripped off. Alteredstate: How right you are, aren't we trying to limit truck to save the environment?? It's so stupid, it's hilarious. Save the environment, use more diesel or gas, have more traffic on the streets instead of using the railines which makes so much more sense, but having a brain really doesn't help in this environment. You answer your own question, Mr. Kelly, will it make sense for tons of taxpayer dollars to be used for this and a Bedford Ferry which will only benefit a few, eh?

james kirk wrote:

This would not even be an issue if it wasn't for John Buchanan penning a deal (in the 1980's) with truckers and their union. Rail (cargo and passenger) in Nova Scotia has suffered ever since. Re-instate the rails from the removed lines and force cargo to leave Halifax (perhaps to a distribution depot) by train which is obviously a more efficient mode of transportation! Our roads and highways will be safer and the reduced wear and tear will prove to be an immediate benefit.

horace wrote:

Great idea. The rail cut would be a direct (efficient) way for trucks to get out of the core area resulting in an overall reduction in noise/traffic/pollution. I'm not quite sure what path 'the cut' follows, but I think another option would be using it as a fast corridor for Metro Transit.

RebeccaJ wrote:

Guy: I'm all for more parkland, but there is already a large park in that area. How about some new affordable housing, possibly even mixed in with small parks. Oh wait, it might screw with the south enders' precious property values. It's an interesting idea though, although I'm not sure how I feel about spending extra taxpayer money to mute the truck sounds to further coddle south end residents. I think that maybe they should look into improving train services like most people are saying here, and while they're at it get on the fast train between Bedford and Hfx! The more rail the better, the less congested the streets will be. I think.

Optimismnotpessimism wrote:

Imagine if they not only paved the rail lines for trucks but also allowed the buses to transport people into downtown Halifax on these roads. Hmmm...does that make too much sense for our city?

MarkyMark wrote:

MacKay believes the rail cut should be paved. That's progressive thinking?

A smarter policy would be to encourage more freight rail traffic and less truck traffic. Start by spending that money on paving the rail cut and build the inland terminal at Rocky Lake, using shuttle trains to access the South End and Fairview Cove container terminals. Just like this study proposes:

<http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/publications/documents/InlandTerminalFinalReport.pdf>

The conspiracy theorist in me has to wonder if all the talk of paving the rail cut is part of upping the value of stocks held by Halterm Ltd. shareholders, whose terminal has been bypassed by the Ceres Terminal in recent years. Surely their investment must be hurting, so a \$50 + million road built by provincial and federal taxpayers directly to their terminal would help, wouldn't it?

Are there any big provincial or federal Tories who hold Halterm shares?

Of course MacKay would rather pave the south end rail cut for Halterm shareholders than do anything to help out a former provincial Grit like Richie Mann, who is a VP with Melford International Terminal - a potential competitor to Halterm & Ceres, even if it is in MacKay's riding.

Something stinks in Nova Scotia and I think it's the provincial and federal Tories (and Grits).

Stop wasting public money on something so foolish as to prop up Halterm investors.

HRMWestEnder wrote:

I think this is missing the point entirely. The South End terminal is not operating at anywhere near capacity because it is an outdated, inadequate facility. Paving a single lane road for trucks overtop of the existing rail line is certainly not going to solve the problem. It is rather disappointing that our politicians and business leaders are not more visionary and forward thinking. The Halterm container terminal should be relocated off the Halifax peninsula - expand the Mill Cove facility, convert Shearwater into a new terminal, or locate it on another part of the province. The South End terminal lands could be sold (at significant values) and converted into mixed use high density residential/commercial district, that would generate millions of tax dollars and invigorate the downtown core. Keep the train terminal and the cruise ship berths, get rid of the containers.

johnfromhalifax wrote:

The government is blocking and discounting public opinion, commonsense and it's own tax payer funded studies to secretly push this thing forward. Why. Really. I really want to know the real reason why. My absolute worst fear... that there is no reason, it's just a big multilayered bureaucracy run amok. One other dumb possibility - they are trying to buy votes in Halifax at the expense of jobs, business and infrastructure in rural areas that need it most. The worst is that they are so sadly misinformed on this project and so fundamentally misread what the people of Halifax want that their plan will fail both coming and going in a disaster type scenario of "taking the federal money just because it is there" that will make the notorious boondoggle at Mirabel Airport look like the Kennedy Space Centre.

Footprint wrote:

A large proportion of the truck traffic through downtown Halifax is local "transload" movements of containers which are being emptied, filled or stored locally. Based on this, a study for HRM by MariNova recommends a Distripark adjacent to Burnside Industrial Park to serve this market in combination with complementary business activities. A daily rail shuttle would use the existing tracks to move transload containers between the Halifax container terminals and the Distripark. While this would not remove all the downtown Halifax trucks, it could shift over 23,000 truck moves to rail within the city and a further 43,000 empty container truck moves from the container terminals to the Distripark as early as 2009. This is about 40% of the international container truck traffic that would otherwise flow through the city. In fact, the concept embodied in MariNova's report to HRM offers three major advantages in terms of logistics, planning process and construction timing: 1. Trucks would only have to come to the edge of the metro area, so could head back out with a new load sooner than with the railcut truckway. This would improve equipment utilization for trucking companies. 2. Tens of millions of dollars in capital costs would be saved, which could be re-allocated to expedite construction of other infrastructure associated with the Atlantic Gateway. 3. We would not have to wait for a truckway before seeing a reduction in downtown truck traffic.

cabottrail wrote:

Follow the logic here. CN is in the rail business . Halifax is supposedly in the "ports"business, well that federal crown corporation called the "port authority" that is. Now, port traffic is container traffic. Trains move containers BUT who took away the second rail line in the cut? Obviously there was a decision made there about the future capacity of this port. Who complained then? Now, here we have all these politicians saying we need to build more and more downtown. Oh, does more downtown mean more people on the roads ? Don't we have enough problems on the peninsula without making them worse? If this cut is to be paved , we know that ends any possibility of a light rail commuter system for this city or rail for the province. How does square with the talks that we need a third bridge? Is that bridge caused because we are simply putting too many people downtown? Would some one at HRM please get all these issues on the table, do some planning and weigh all the options before Rodney gets involved in this one. Maybe the light rail should be elevated? Ahh, that's what Rodney and Peter really want, an "Atlantic gateway roller coaster ride" through the cut , over the new bridge , and then to the airport and back , Now we're talking!!! By the way, Calgary and Edmonton have had light rail since around 1982,Ottawa has had separate express roads for buses since around 1985. In both cases, these systems travel right downtown. Maybe a model?