



Halifax Inland Terminal and Trucking Options Study

-- Rail Cut Environmental Issues --

8.3 Environment

The cut would have to be widened in a number of locations and the environmental issues would need to be addressed. **It is possible that CN could widen the rail cut as a matter of right, providing it was done without the need to apply for a blasting permit.**

Most rock removal in Halifax is now undertaken with hydraulic breakers and this technology could be applied to the widening of the rail cut.

8.6 Rail Cut vs. NIT (New Inland Terminal) Concept

If the project were to proceed, the following steps would be required:

- The rail cut needs to be widened in order to accommodate the truckway. This could and should be done without blasting, in order that the CEAA permitting process will not be triggered. **As the major use of the rail cut will still be rail traffic, the project can proceed as of right.**

- **The Halifax Urban Greenway Association, which is trying to create a hiking, jogging, cycling path along the CN lands, would probably press for an environmental assessment, which should be done in any case. The environmental positives will probably balance the negatives.**

- HRM plans are inconsistent as to the zoning of the railway cut and as to land use thereon. **The cut should be consistently zoned and perhaps should have its own special transportation zone designation which would prohibit the construction of further homes on the available land, particularly on the west side of Beaufort Avenue.** It should be recognized that the zoning would not necessarily prevent the development of the land as it is under federal jurisdiction, but a transportation zone from Bayers Road to the Ocean Terminals, properly worded, would in the long term facilitate the utilization of this space for uses compatible with transportation.

8.7 Environmental Issues

The use of the rail cut as a truckway or as an additional vehicle expressway to the downtown area should be the subject of a detailed environmental impact assessment.

There will be positive and negative events in the environmental risk profile.

It would appear that there are no significant habitat or cultural resources that would be causes for concern.

- There may be contaminated soils but the rail bed is built on bedrock and very little overburden exists in the cut other than the ballast for the rail line.

- There will be an improved local air quality in the downtown area as a result of the removal of 53% of the truck movements to and from the Halifax Ocean Terminals, but **a concomitant reduction in air quality along the rail cut.**

- **Concerns over the air quality and noise issues regarding the utilization of the railway cut as a truckway need to be addressed.**

The rail cut does not provide shorter distances to the downtown, but does change 'stop and go' city driving to expressway driving conditions.