

# Greenways Nova Scotia

A Publication of NSPACTS ( Nova Scotians Promoting Active Transportation on Community Trails)

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Learn more about our Three Big Ideas at our AGM, 1:30 p.m., November 8 at Acadia University. Paul Euloth, Regional Trails Coordinator For HRM, presents this Big Picture for Nova Scotia. RSVP at [admin@nspacts.ca](mailto:admin@nspacts.ca)

## Where are the Big Ideas in N.S.? We have Three!

In Nova Scotia, Active Transportation on Community Trails lags far behind other provinces, especially in rural areas. AT on roads is making some progress, but not enough. Here's a way through- or should we say, three ways. Let's call them Three Big Ideas...

### First Big Idea



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## News From the Chester Connector

The Chester Connector got \$3/4 million funding from 3 levels of government to provide alternative employment to traditional primary industry, and promote tourism and

its spinoffs, according to ACOA.- but targets are absent, and no operational audit has been done. The Chester Connector is bragged up as a "multi user trail" that in-

cludes motorized vehicles such as quad ATV and recently/sadly broadened to include motorcycles (contrary to the posted Ministry of Natural Resources signage).

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What's done is done but things are not static.

Strange that the Municipality, which appears to be signatory to the Active Transportation aims of the NS Union of Municipalities, has not confronted the problems & costs from motorized traffic. Neglect is as good as opposition to promoting Active Transportation or Active Living. Aside from nature, the wear and tear on the trail is due to all-weather motorized rough treaded vehicles. The speeding and carving of ruts by even a few powered vehicle owners does nothing to encourage general use of the Chester Connector by other citizens let alone cycle tourists. (our road shoulders are generally unsafe which explains lack of a local cycling tradition) Confidence in the surface is lacking. Without reports showing maintenance costs/traffic usage and socio-economic impacts, we have personal opinions and anecdotes. Not a healthy condition for constructive community development.

It is good to see the diplomatic efforts being made by the Chester Rec Dept and especially trails coordinator and qualified environmentalist Gordon Tate to repair sections of the trail and obtain metrics. They and the Councillors need all the support they can get. This summer traffic counter equipment is operating. The ability to match costs to traffic will make it possible to manage trail expenditures through lessons learned and informed actions.

-By David Major

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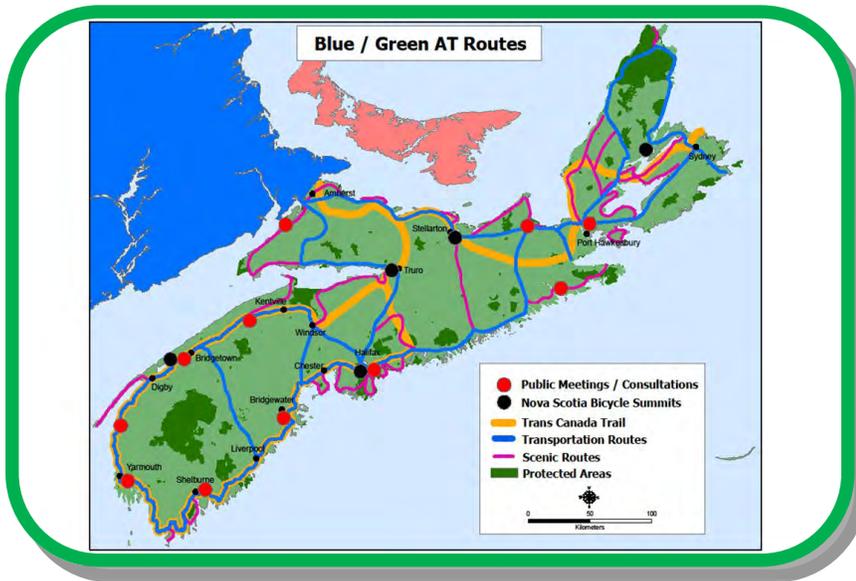
## The Trans Canada Evangeline Trail: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

NSPACTS urges all three levels of government to work towards acquiring the Windsor-Hantsport Railway Corridor as a greenway corridor, to preserve the corridor for future generations. The abandoned rail corridor through the Annapolis Valley is presently endangered, and needs to be secured as a Greenway as soon as possible. Once, the Dominion Atlantic Railway was the pride of valley residents, employing many people. The elegant maroon and gold Evangeline trains carried New England tourists, university students, workers going home for the weekend, thousands of barrels of apples, bone china, lumber, and dry goods. That era gone, we are left with the abandoned rail beds. The Trans Canada



There is still time to save the DAR corridor

## Second Big Idea



Integrate the Greenway and Blue Route on-road Bike Plan into a Comprehensive Rural AT plan administered by TIR

Evangeline Trail ( continued from pg. 2)

Trail has offered us an exciting vision to replace the DAR. It's time to pay attention to that vision. So much is lost if we don't.

### What would the Evangeline Trail look like?

It would be a scenic, low-maintenance route along the banks of the Cornwallis and Annapolis Rivers, and through the heart of beautiful rural communities. It would be tree-lined, for shade in the summer, and the sheer beauty of snow-laden branches for snowshoers and cross-country skiers. Plaques would interpret the history and culture of the Annapolis Valley for cycling and hiking tourists. Benches would give rest to local walkers and bird-watchers. The surface would be hardpacked and rut-free. "B and B's" and a variety of dining experiences-gastropubs, four-star inns, ice cream parlours, fish and chip stands and fair trade coffee bars- all would be sheer delight to cycling groups like our own Ramblers or visiting cyclists from Europe or other provinces in Canada. Our communities would be connected. All this for the public good. Evangeline Trail would be an AT spine, with side trips beckoning on-road to the Bay of Fundy, Port Williams, Blomidon, and mountaintop parks and trails. Cycling and Hiking tourism are growing hugely elsewhere in Canada- why not here? And best of all, local residents would increase their daily hours of

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activity as the communities they live in become “walkable” again. Remember, in the valley, up to 40% of us live within 1 km. of the DAR rail bed. The Evangeline Trail would enhance population health. And finally, it would be part of the Trans Canada Trail- the very thing effectively promised when TCT first gifted the DAR corridor to the province in 2002, a gift worth \$10,000,000 dollars, for the purpose of trail development. So to coin a phrase, “When are we planning?”

### **What does it look like now?**

A few sections, such as the Cornwallis River Pathway Trail in Cambridge/Coldbrook and the Annapolis Royal trail, already resemble this vision.

Others are managed by motorized Trail Groups. While these groups work hard to keep the surface in good shape, it is costly to do so. The deep treads of ATV’s soon become visible, small and then larger berms appearing, until the trail is rutted. It is well-known by civil engineers that these berms and ruts contribute to the washout hazard. The answer is constant maintenance, and this is the cost that keeps on costing. Sometimes they surface the trail with a coarse gravel as stopgap, creating a surface unsuitable for any users but ATVer’s. Even if the surface were not so poor, Active Transportation users, who tend to be conscious of both their health and the environment, are deterred from using such trails. “Sharing” with machines emitting fumes and noise is a no-starter for them. Adjacent landowners lament the loss of sleep and property values. At 3 a.m., “enforcement’ is a hollow word. It’s the dirty little secret of motorized trails.

Today, some sections of the DAR rail bed are truly abandoned. With little or no help from government bureaucracy toward an alternate, admirable goal of an Active Transportation trail, communities in which motorized use is obvious-

ly inappropriate ( e.g. extreme proximity to homes) find their sections of trail are still under DNR management. The corridor has been severed in places by DNR to prevent further erosion and siltation caused by washouts. Used by local OHVer’s , these sections of the rail bed are overgrown and increasingly rutted, even collapsed at culverts.

NSPACTS believes the choice between the two kinds of trails on the DAR corridor is obvious. The cost of building and maintaining an AT trail is about one-quarter that of the motorized mania that inexplicably gripped governments of the past. It’s time to move ahead. With a little political will from municipal, provincial, and federal government, The Evangeline Trail could restore pride to the rail bed and preserve it for generations to come. It would boost the economy, bring peace and the quiet enjoyment of their homes back to adjacent homeowners, and save millions in health care dollars as people do the best thing in the world for their health: go for a walk, a jog, a stroll, a bike ride- on the iconic Trans Canada Evangeline Trail.

-By The NSPACTS Executive



**Phase 1 TCT- Musquodoboit Trailway- Musquodoboit Harbour. Built as a Greenway to TCT standards, it attracts active, healthy use for all ages and abilities and encourages environmental awareness.**

## Where does your money go?

While the press has reported on Freedom of Information issues with the Ingrampport Connector to Highway 103, they have not picked up a related story. We hear the government is ready to spend \$800,000 or more ( some observers predict a cool million) of public money to enhance the Ingrampport Roundabout. Why? To permit access by ATV's and snowmobiles to the St. Margarets Bay multi-use ( motorized) Rail Trail. While this is not explicit, it is obvious. (See map,p.6) Cyclists and pedestrians normally would access such a trail at the on-road grade, safely and at far less cost. Considering the tax burden of this one costly project, NSPACTS wonders how many other OHV overpasses Transport and Infrastructure Renewal is prepared to fund . Tales of our trails are full of perplexing decisions, and ironies abound.

Irony Number One: When the SMB Rail Trail itself was first proposed, community consultations were held, but the results of those consultations were never made public. Freedom of Information requests by a SMB resident pulled them out of DNR filing cabinets. We now know that before the motorized trail was built, DNR and HPP knew that less than one third of citizens in the communities along the trail supported motorized use.

- Almost 90% wanted to be able to walk the trail.
- 65% wanted a non-motorized trail as opposed to 31% who did.
- While 84% of adjacent landowners used it for walking ,only 20% used it for ATVs and 9% for snowmobiles.

- Only 14% of adjacent landowners wanted ATV use on the trail.  
-When asked to describe problems with the trail the use of motorized vehicles was the number one concern and noise was third.

-Four different communities were identified in the area and three out of four were strongly against motorized use. Community 1: 54.9% to 25.4%, community 2 :45.5% to 28%, Community 4: 61.3% to 6.5%. Only Community 3 was in favour by 42.9% to 38.3%.

A motorized trail was built anyway, the consultation tagged a "community development model." And now the "community" gets to pay yet again for a type of trail most never wanted.

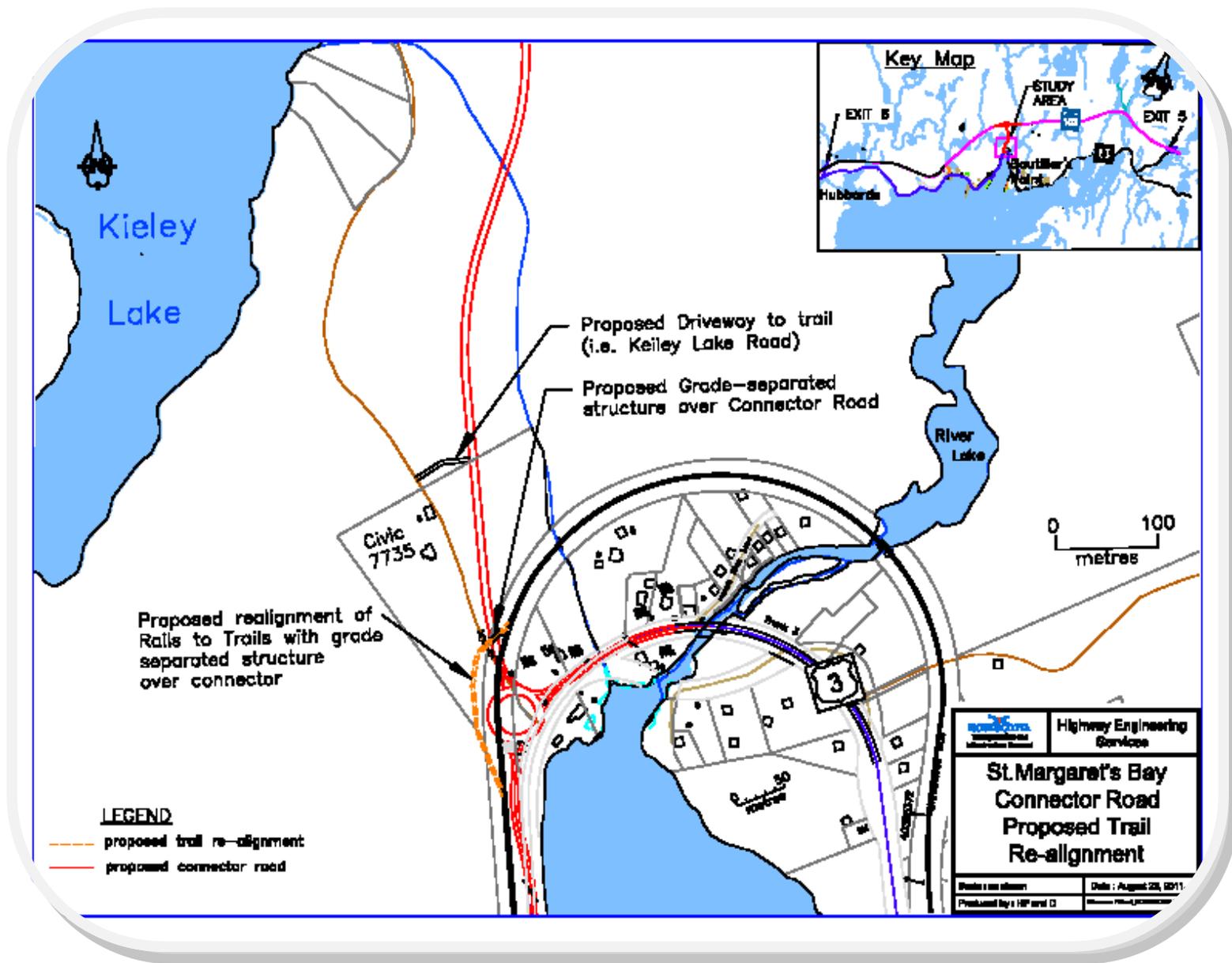
### Irony Number Two:

\$800,000 was the same figure publicly touted by HPP officials as the reason there would be no bypass around Paradise. After the Minister of Natural Resources ruled that if developed, the railbed through Paradise should be a non-motorized trail , residents were told they would have to put up with a motorized trail anyway. Why? Because a bypass would cost \$800,000 , way too much. Another Greenway denied. As the benefits of Active Transportation trails become more and more obvious, here we are in NS: an overpass to allow motorized use -affordable. A bypass to prohibit motorized use– not affordable. As long as motorized use is the *priority*, the *sine qua non* of Nova Scotia trails, we will pay and pay. In so many ways.

## Meanwhile in PEI,



**On The Trans Canada Confederation Trail**



A Sketch from Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal showing a proposed overpass where the St. Margaret's Bay Rails To Trails meets the Ingramport Roundabout. The "grade -separated" structure (overpass) is proposed for one reason: because ATV's are on the trail. The Off-Highway Vehicles Act requires this, you will find. If the St. Margaret's Bay Rail Trail had been what the communities actually asked for– a non-motorized Greenway, an Active Transportation trail, taxpayers would be spared at least this burden of \$800,000. And so much more. We have been so patient.

## Our Vision Statement



1. Promote and create sustainable trails and pathways that accommodate all forms of Active Transportation including mobility aids.
2. Actively advocate and promote people-powered trails.
3. Challenge trail policies within government that fail to embrace and promote active living.
4. Advocate for policies that protect the health of our communities by promoting laws that prohibit excessive noise and other forms of pollution.
5. Promote the use of trails and pathways in active living educational programs.
6. Support affiliated organizations, groups, towns and municipalities that advance the above goals.
7. Establish a library of reference material
8. Support the development of trails and pathways through the community development model.
9. Recognize human powered forms of travel
10. Support each other, share information, and develop strategies to create a common voice for our goals..



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## Third Big Idea

**Adopt Trans Canada Trail Greenway Vision Province-Wide:**

**This means Phase 1 and Phase 2**

