

Hail Pond Park/Dunbrack Street Multi-Use Path

What We Heard Report

Halifax Regional Municipality
HRM #24-5014

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1 Project Objectives

Given the significant benefits of improved active transportation (AT) connectivity, the goal of this project is to develop a functional plan that would identify preferred AT connections to close the gap in HRM's AT network between the Chain of Lakes Trail and trails in Long Lakes Provincial Park. There is also an opportunity to connect this main link with Stanley Park Sport's Field to improve community access to the facilities and contribute to further connections into Spryfield.

Following the vision of the Active Transportation Priorities Plan (ATPP) and the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP), HRM has been improving the reach of their AT network to ensure that the public sees AT as a viable means of travelling throughout the Region. The IMP highlights the importance of taking a Complete Streets approach to improve comfort and safety for all vulnerable road users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users and identifies a "Priority Connection for Multi-Use Pathway" along the Dunbrack Street corridor (Action 79). The ATPP has an objective of providing facilities to encourage an increase in the number of residents who chose to walk or bike and includes an "Envisioned Greenway" along Dunbrack Street through the study area. This project is intended to contribute to achieving the greenway vision established in these two planning documents.

2 Engagement Activities

An engagement strategy was developed to determine how and when external stakeholders were to be engaged in the process to ensure that all relevant issues were raised at the earliest opportunity and addressed as needed in the early stages of the project to set up the ultimate implementation of this project for success.

1. Presentations were held for the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) at scheduled committee meetings to review concept options.
2. Both NS Department of Public Works and NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables have been engaged as they are the respective owners of the right-of-way and park lands.
3. The Halifax Utilities Coordinating Committee (HUCC) has been contacted to inform them of the project and solicit their feedback. Utility companies were also contacted to obtain information relevant to the project area:
4. HRM staff developed a [Shape Your City project webpage](#) and hosted a feedback survey from April 1, 2025 to May 20, 2025.
5. The following advocacy groups have been contacted, and a stakeholder meeting was held on April 2, 2025 to review concept options and solicit their feedback. A site walk with representatives from several of these groups was held on April 3, 2025.
 - Halifax Cycling Coalition
 - Cycling Nova Scotia
 - Walk n Roll Halifax
 - Hike Nova Scotia
 - Long Lake Parks Association
 - Ecology Action Centre

- CNIB
 - Spryfield Community Association
6. HRM Staff participated in a meeting with Councillor Cleary and residents of the Roxbury apartment building on May 12, 2025.

3 Concept Options

Based on the pre-screening, three routes were selected to be developed into concepts for the connection from Walter Havill to Osborne (Route 1A, Route 1B, and Route 2) and are shown in Figure 1. Single concepts for the Dunbrack @ Osborne intersection and the Stanley Park Sports Field connection are also included in the concept drawings.

Figure 1: Conceptual routes and connections



4 Concept Feedback

Several stakeholder groups were engaged to provide feedback on the concept plans. Summaries of the feedback obtained are detailed below.

4.1 Utilities

No new feedback was received from utilities at this stage. Key conflicts identified in the existing conditions review were avoided.

4.2 Stakeholder groups

A virtual meeting with the stakeholder groups took place on April 2, 2025. Then on April 3rd, a site walk was held with an open invitation to all stakeholder groups. Key points of feedback are noted below.

4.2.1 Long Lake Provincial Park Association

- Considerations were suggested for a wider multi-use path (MUP).
- Amenities were inquired about. Locations will be noted but the specific designs are out of the scope of this functional design.
- It was requested that accessibility be more well-defined in the evaluation criteria.

4.2.2 Halifax Cycling Coalition

- The necessity of slip lanes was discussed and a preference to remove the slip lanes was expressed.
- They are also in favour of a wider MUP.

4.2.3 Cycling Nova Scotia

- Winter maintenance was highlighted.
- Challenges with the grading of Route 2 were discussed.
- They are also in favour of a wider MUP.
- 5A Lighting was highlighted, as shown below in Figure 2.

Cycling Nova Scotia is working on improving the AT network in Spryfield, which is located just south of the study area for this project. The Dunbrack MUP for the current project will connect with the Spryfield AT network at the Stanley Park connection.

The focus group for the Spryfield active transportation (AT) network expressed a desire to link local neighbourhoods to their main corridor on Herring Cove Road. Cycling Nova Scotia aims to connect to local parks and trails for a more cohesive network and the proposed network map shows plans to continue the core network to the Stanley Park sports field from the south. The group also emphasized

developing “community-to-community” links to improve accessibility between the communities’ amenities.

4.3 Illumination

Pathway lighting was noted during stakeholder discussions. Lighting design is part of a future phase of this project. However, the importance of following responsible outdoor lighting principals is key. The following principals (Figure 2) address key concerns raised by the public and stakeholders around the impacts of lighting.

Figure 2: Five Lighting Principles

Five Lighting Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting			 DarkSky 
Responsible outdoor lighting is	1 Useful <u>Avoid</u>	Use light only if it is needed All light should have a clear purpose. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and their habitats.	
	2 Targeted <u>Aim</u>	Direct light so it falls only where it is needed Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.	
	3 Low Level <u>Attenuate</u>	Light should be no brighter than necessary Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions, as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.	
	4 Controlled <u>Adapt</u>	Use light only when it is needed Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.	
	5 Warm-colored <u>Appropriate</u>	Use warmer color lights where possible Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.	

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4.4 Landowners

Several landowners along the study area were also contacted for comments, with the received input summarized below.

4.4.1 Nova Scotia Parks

Nova Scotia Parks did not comment. As the concept plans did not impact NS Parks Land, this was expected.

4.4.2 Nova Scotia Department of Public Works (NSDPW)

- Discussions to continue regarding crossing at both intersections and how multi-use AT facilities will be provided at the crosswalks. NSDPW is looking for national guidance on this issue. Cross-rides will likely not be approved by NSDPW for the Walter Havill Dr intersection.
- Consideration of removing slip lanes at the intersection with Walter Havill Drive is possible and will be subject to NSDPW review.
- Left turn hardening extensions to the Dunbrack St medians will be subject to NSDPW review based on turning templates.

4.4.3 Trimble Court

No opinion from the owners of Trimble Court has yet been received. Continued follow up will be attempted for the duration of the project.

4.5 Trail material

The use of a geogrid product to protect roots if the existing trail is upgraded is a possibility. Figure 3 shows the components of a typical product used for this purpose. It also shows trail surfaces that use an organic binder, or a resin binder, as the surface material rather than asphalt.

Figure 3: Alternative Trail Materials



4.6 Public Survey

A public survey was prepared by HRM and distributed through the Shape Your City platform. Note that for public feedback, the different routes were named “Options” but the number/letter descriptors stayed the same (i.e. Route 1A became Option 1A), and that terminology is used below.

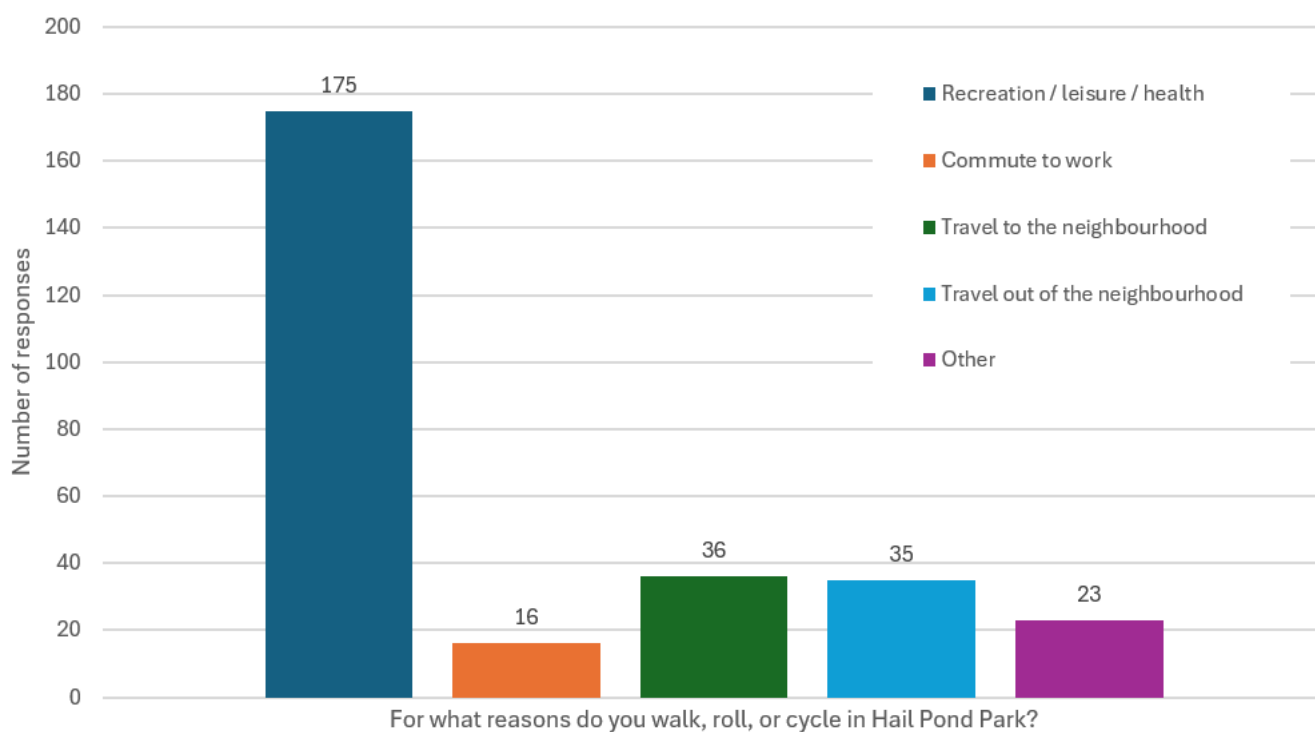
These results represent survey responses as of May 5, 2025. The survey will remain open until May 19. While the 191 responses received are expected to be representative, these results will be updated following survey close.

The following demographic trends were observed among the survey respondents:

- ~¾ came from local residents (the closest two forward sortation areas)
 - over 75% stated they used the existing trails more than a few times per month
 - over 80% stated they used active modes in the neighbourhood more than a few times per month
- ~¾ came from adults between 25 and 65 years of age
- slightly more people who identified as male responded (53%)
- very few people who identify as a minority or aboriginal completed the survey (6%)

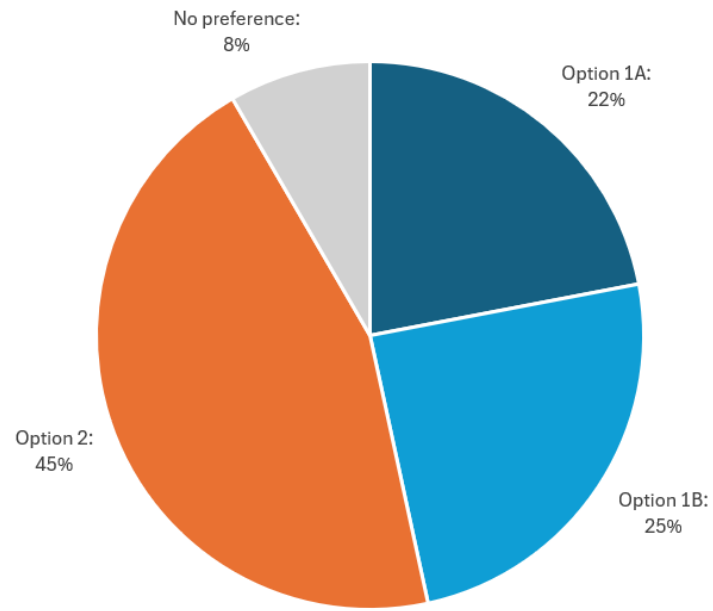
The primary reason people visit Hail Pond Park today is recreation / leisure / health (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Reason to visit Hail Pond Park



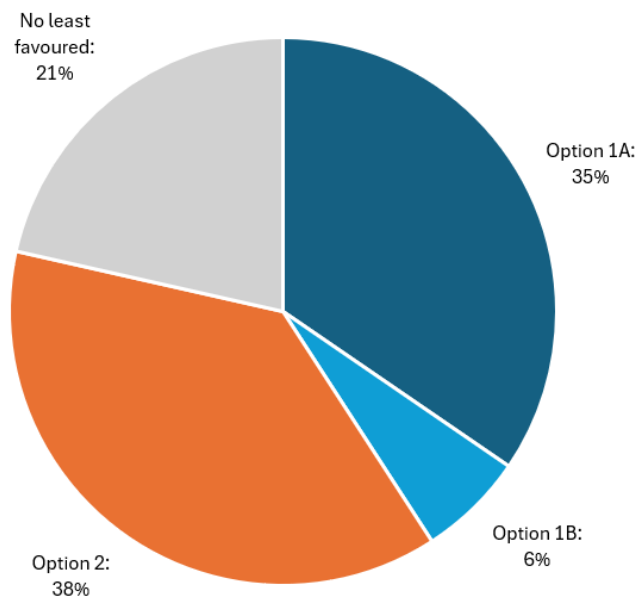
Overall, there was a roughly equal split between respondents who preferred one of the Option 1 variants (47% total) and those who preferred Option 2 (45% total).

Figure 5: Most Preferred Option



When asked which option they least preferred, the results were more polarizing. Most respondents had specific reasons to dislike Option 1A or Option 2 strongly. Many did not identify an individual option as being their least preferred.

Figure 6: Least Preferred Option



Within these overall preferences, the survey data was explored to determine if any demographic groups expressed markedly different opinions. The results were mostly uniform across all respondents with a few notable variances:

- People who frequently use the existing Hail Pond Park trail were more likely to prefer Option 2 (56% of frequent users, 42% of occasional users, and only about 30% of others). This aligns with commentary received prioritizing preservation of the existing trail.
- People 65 and older were less likely to express firm opinions on most or least preferred routes.

In response to questions of the format “What are your thoughts on Option X”, respondents wrote in open ended comments with key themes as follows:

Option	Positive Feedback	Concerns
1A	- Separation from Traffic: The trail is away from Dunbrack Street, reducing noise and pollution. - Scenic Route: The path through Hail Pond Park is more pleasant and offers a natural environment. - Safety: The route is perceived as safer for pedestrians and cyclists, especially for families and children.	- Preservation of Nature: There is a strong desire to maintain the natural beauty and tranquility of the park. - Wildlife: Concerns about disturbing the wildlife and ecosystem around Hail Pond.
1B	- Direct Path: The route is more direct and convenient for commuting. - Balance: Seen as a reasonable balance between Option 1A and Option 2 - Separation from Traffic: The trail is away from Dunbrack Street, reducing noise and pollution. - Scenic Route: The path through Hail Pond Park is more pleasant and offers a natural environment.	- Preservation of Nature: There is a strong desire to maintain the natural beauty and tranquility of the park. - Wildlife: Concerns about disturbing the wildlife and ecosystem around Hail Pond.
2	- Direct Route: The path is more direct and convenient for commuting. - Separation from Pedestrians: The route keeps cyclists away from natural trail walkers, reducing conflicts. - Preservation of Nature: There is a strong desire to maintain the natural beauty and tranquility of the park.	- Proximity to Traffic: The route runs alongside Dunbrack Street, leading to concerns about noise and air quality. - Less Scenic: Seen as less pleasant and scenic compared to options that go through Hail Pond Park. - Safety Issues: High-speed traffic on Dunbrack Street poses safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.6.1 General comments for the project

- Positive Feedback:
 - Overall, there is strong support for improving active transportation infrastructure.
 - Connectivity: Enhancing connections between different trails and parks.
 - Safety: Ensuring that new paths are safe and accessible for all users.
- Concerns:
 - Conflict Between Users: Potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists, especially in areas with high foot traffic. Fast-moving cyclists could pose a danger to slower-moving pedestrians.
 - Crosswalks and Signals: Requests for leading pedestrian intervals and more crosswalk time at intersections.
 - Trail Maintenance: Suggestions for better maintenance of existing trails, including grading and drainage improvements.

4.7 Roxbury Resident Meeting

On Monday, May 12, HRM staff and Councillor Cleary met with approximately 25 residents of the Roxbury condominiums. The following points summarize the discussion after the project was presented.

A paper survey was prepared by residents and circulated to attendees. While the feedback received and summarized below is expected to be representative, this will be updated when those survey results are provided by the residents.

- Health and Environmental Concerns
- Concern about losing trees along Dunbrack with Option 2. Trees block noise and also beautify the property. Would like to see a plan to plant new trees.
- Air quality issue due to proximity to Dunbrack traffic. Noise concerns. Studies show health issues related to proximity to traffic.
- Environmental criteria too low.
- Desires to leave Hail Pond Park as it is.
- Concern about having lights and asphalt trail in the park disrupting wildlife.
- Concern about flooding and erosion of trail.
- Process Concerns
- Concern that Long Lake Park route options should be explored further.
- Views on Multi-use Paths
- Opposing experiences presented with comments that user conflict and fast bikes have / have not been an issue on Chain of Lakes Trail
- Concerns about not enough analysis into the increase in users
- Design Comments
- Accessibility of upgraded trail viewed as a positive.
- Children's safety should be considered.
- Crosswalk at the mailboxes would improve safety for the school bus stop here.
- Consider putting the MUP on the north side of Walter Havill.
- Multiple thoughts that making the Walter Havill intersection safe is important.
- One comment that removing slip lanes is good but keeping a right turn lane onto Walter Havill is important because of high speeds.
- Worries about blasting the rock wall on Route 1B and Route 2