

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2012**

**A D D E N D U M**

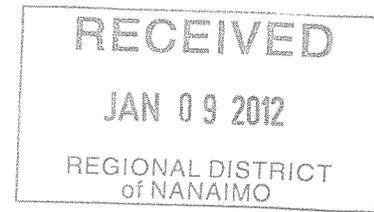
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**CORRESPONDENCE**

- 2 - 4            **Laurie Gourlay, Mid Island Sustainability & Stewardship Initiative,** re RDN Trans  
Canada Trail route and green space.
- 5                **Rob Steele,** re Rerouting of the Trans Canada Trail.



RDN, Committee of the Whole  
Regional District of Nanaimo  
6300 Hammond Bay Road  
Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6N2



Re: RDN Trans Canada Trail Route and Green space

January 9, 2012

Dear Directors,

Happy New Year, and congratulations to you all as you begin your terms as elected representatives for the Regional District of Nanaimo.

We understand that a Trans Canada Trail representative will speak to the CoW at your January 10th meeting.

A cross-section of groups and individuals who have been involved with trails and greenspace in Area A would like to have the opportunity to address these matters, before any decisions are made as they relate to the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) route within the RDN.

This 'Cedar & Circle Route' initiative, addressing the southern RDN region, would serve to engage local residents, business and communities, offering practical and fiscally responsible options to implement priorities for trails and greenspace.

Discussions have been underway since last spring that take into account RDN priorities addressed in the recently approved Regional Growth Strategy, and the Area A Official Community Plan, as well as the Cedar Village Design workshops. Recommendations from these discussions offer opportunities to integrate the National goals of the TCT with those of the RDN, local residents and Area A.

We would therefore request a chance to bring these recommendations to your attention, and are prepared to make a briefing for staff and appropriate RDN Committees.

We would also add that we have been in touch with Trails BC and the Trans Canada Trail organizers over the past summer, with respect to these recommendations - and they have expressed interest in supporting local preferences. In this regard we understand the decision on the routing of the TCT remains with the RDN.

Essentially then, we have identified possible routes for a new main routing of the TCT - a circular trail that would take the TCT from the Nanaimo River near Cassidy, through Cedar and back into Extension/Chase River and Nanaimo. This circuit also offers a trail option that would connect to the Duke Point ferries, with both walk-on and circular route options for those coming over from the mainland to enjoy eco-tourism activities.

We believe there are funding partnerships that would make this Cedar route no more expensive than that being proposed for the bridge and trail improvements that are being sought for the present designated TCT route. We also believe the route we are suggesting would provide more economic benefits to the RDN, and local businesses and residents, as well as recreational opportunities and viable transportation corridors.

Very briefly such considerations would include:

- 1) the RDN reserve decision on TCT routing until new information has been reviewed from local residents and organizations. (eg - MISSI, etc)
- 2) MISSI, etc will prepare a preferred TCT 'Cedar & Circle Route', that would offer connection to the TCT at two points (TBD); with the present TCT routing between those two points changed to become a 'secondary connector route, for hiking, etc'.
- 3) a brief will be prepared that identifies social and economic benefits of this Cedar route, including reference to the new Area A OCP and the RDN's RGS, and the Cedar Village Design workshops.
- 4) important properties that offer double service, in terms of meeting stated RDN goals for trail development as well as for access to greenspace and the Nanaimo River, be considered in light of the potential for a new Cedar TCT route and associated long-term economic and social benefits.(eg - the Daisy Hill farm & Lois Holmgren farm that are both coming up for sale.)

In making these recommendations we would note that the RDN's present TCT 'designated route':

- leads south to the Nanaimo River, is under-utilized, and goes through a rugged backwoods hiking area including the 'Abyss' .
- to complete the present route will require an expensive bridge to be built across the Nanaimo River, as well as upgrades to meet TCT requirements as a multi-use trail that accommodates, equestrians, cyclists and walkers.
- is located away from most public access points as well as amenities; and does not encourage use by many visitors or local residents, nor contribute significantly to local economic spin-offs and other benefits.
- marginally serves local needs, and does not meet future TCT route expansion considerations for linkages from Duke Point ferries (to Tsawassen).
- could easily be re-designated as a secondary connector route, in favour of a new TCT designated routing via a 'Cedar & Circle Route'.
- was made some twenty years ago; and so it is both reasonable and responsible for the public to be given an opportunity to re-visit that decision, and the most cost-effective use of taxpayer funds in the area.

We would finally note that partnership opportunities may reduce costs if a new TCT route were to be designated, including potential funding with local business and the provincial government. We can elaborate on this at your request.

In this respect it is our understanding that the TCT can match up to 50% for a routing within the RDN that meets their goals, until March 2013. We believe a 'Cedar & Circle Route' could qualify for such partnership assistance should the present routing, designated but not completed via the 'Abyss' area, were to be re-designated by the RDN as a secondary TCT trail routing.

In conclusion we note that it is not our intention to denigrate the TCT or its supporters. The goal is both grande and practical, and has our full support.

We very much support the TCT's goals of remaining "a community-based project". We are in fact making these suggestions so that both the TCT goals and priorities, as well as that of local residents and the regional district, may be furthered for the betterment of all.

In this light we look forward to working with the RDN, and the TCT, in meeting trail and greenspace goals that reflect the wishes of all parties, including those of local communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Laurie Gourlay  
President, MISSI

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I object to the rerouting of the Trans Canada Trail. The deviation of the trail could pose serious implications for many people within Area A and the public should have been notified prior to any changing of the current designated route.

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