

Thanks Mayor, Councillors for allowing me to speak tonight. .

My name is Peter Long, and I live Downtown. I am speaking on behalf of the Downtown Residents Association and its Trails Committee. I'm also speaking as part of my WhitehorseWalks walking advocacy.

It's been a couple of years that the Airport Perimeter Trail has been closed. Again this year, Downtown recreation needs are severely compromised. One reason I agreed to move back downtown was because the airport escarpment offers really nice walking in a unique natural setting and, with a little work at the south end of the airport, has the potential to be an incredible walking loop. Shortly there'll be fields of crocuses in spots beside the fence and again we can't be there to witness this annual event.

In public submissions during the process of reviewing the Airport Expansion onto the Airport Perimeter Trail, people talked about swapping land parcels to allow moving the fence.

Administration responded saying... This land is subject to federal regulation and the required survey work would be a significant undertaking from a practical and financial perspective. As such, protection for the trail can be considered through a separate process, such as an easement on YG property, should the City determine this is desirable.

Administration further confirmed that Yukon Government has committed to safety of the trail along the escarpment, and more information will be brought forward following the geotechnical assessment.

We can see the airport fence above Drury from our home on Hawkins St. During the past winter, we watched heavy equipment being used, presumably to keep the perimeter road clear of snow. Yet the trail is still closed for walking.

If the perimeter road is safe for heavy equipment to use, then it should be safe for people walking, biking, snowshoeing and kicksledding. It would require creating a new section of perimeter road inland of the fence, behind a new section of fence. Then use the old fence as a safety barricade and let us walk on the old section of perimeter road, which is obviously safe, thereby bypassing the unsafe parts.

This should happen where ever needed so residents and governments don't need to go through this process every few years. Doing this while the airport has funding for the extending the runway only makes sense.

I talked to Minister Clark a couple of weeks ago and pointed out that the trail was likely here long before the airport, and that the 1959 NRC Escarpment Report said that to stop erosion, development must not happen near the escarpment edges. The perimeter road is development. I pointed out that the airport folk must realize that we all live here, and sometimes in federal issues, our trails need strong supporting voices from ALL levels of local governments.

Downtown Residents Association would like to be a stakeholder group in steps involved in determining our trail's desirability during the geotechnical assessment, in trail safety and easements on YG property.

This recreational trail helps bring the wonder and beauty of nature into the hearts and minds of residents and visitors, reminding us of our heritage and cautioning us that we are merely occupants of this world, charged with its preservation and enhancement.

Heavy equipment can safely operate where we need to walk. It seems YG is OK with putting in a new road and fence. Downtown Residents Association is very concerned in the steps involved in both re-opening this vital recreational corridor, and in how to go forward in connecting the south end to the Yukon River Trail and the Millennium Trail.

Thanks