

**Delegate:** Keith Lay, (Active Trails Whitehorse Association)

**Date:** Monday, December 5, 2022

**Topic:** Request to amend the Snowmobile Bylaw

Good evening! My name is Keith Lay. I live in Porter Creek. I am here as an associate of Active Trails Whitehorse Association to ask that the city amend the Snowmobile Bylaw.

On March 4, 2022 ATWA submitted two documents to the Community Services Committee.

One outlined the numerous reasons and excuses we have been given over the past eight years as to why the City of Whitehorse refuses to consider amending the 2012 Snowmobile Bylaw, in order to add *so-called* non-motorized multiple use trails, greenbelts, and open spaces to its list of *Excluded Areas*.

This change would require snowmobile operators to use the *designed* and *designated* motorized multiple use trails that are featured on the City's MMU trails map.

The second eleven-page document examined the reasons for our request. The names of 21 people were attached to that document indicating their support for the amendment. Unfortunately, we have yet to receive a reply despite the passage of nine months.

Two years ago, at a City Council meeting of Dec. 7, 2020, Councillor Boyd told citizens that "administration confirmed that a top priority [would be] to identify the policies and bylaws that need to be updated" to reflect the intentions of the 2020 Trail Plan.

However, as yet there has been no move to amend the Snowmobile Bylaw to reflect the wishes of the majority of those citizens who took part in the development of the 2020 Trail Plan, and who agreed with the plan's definition of a non-motorized multiple use trail: a trail that is "to be used by a variety of non-motorized users."

The expectation is that such trails will be non-motorized throughout the entire year and if, in order to meet that expectation a Snowmobile Bylaw has

to be amended, then administration should be asked to uphold its promise to Councillor Boyd and to all citizens, and update the bylaw.

Administration will probably tell you that it looked into the possibility of recommending a change to the Snowmobile Bylaw during the preparation of the 2020 Trail Plan, but as 92% of respondents to the engagement survey were “generally” satisfied with their trail experiences, the issue was not pursued.

This is the question that solicited such a response.

*On the whole, do you have satisfying experiences on the Whitehorse trail network?*

When you ask a “motherhood” question you usually get a “motherhood” response. Obviously, the vast majority of people are going to say *yes* to such a question. But even so, only 38% said they “always” had satisfying experiences.

As to how *this* question actually leads administration to the conclusion that the bylaw should not be amended is incomprehensible.

In any case, the Trail Plan clearly states that non-motorized multiple use trails are to be used by a variety of non-motorized users, and snowmobilers *are not non-motorized users*.

In our view, ignoring city policies and plans when it comes to trail issues is becoming an all-too-common occurrence. For example, the 2010’s Official Community Plan called for the city to consider the separation of motorized and non-motorized trail use wherever feasible, something the city has failed to do. (18.5.1)

The Trail Plan survey found that 97% of the 1,415 respondents used Whitehorse trails for walking. Of those respondents only 19% used our trails for snowmobiling.

(See <https://www.whitehorse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/TrailPlanUpdateWhatWeHear.pdf>, p. 10.)

This begs the question as to why the city on one hand gives so much attention to designating more motorized trails, and yet on the other refuses to ensure

that non-motorized users, who make up the vast majority of trail users, are not provided with neighbourhood trails that are non-motorized year-round.

The last two neighbourhood trail plans have failed to provide *any* truly non-motorized trails. So much for trail equity and trail equality.

Next week you will be entertaining Councillor's Cameron's motion asking that the Snowmobile Bylaw be amended to ensure that there are at least a *few* trails in Whitehorse North that will be non-motorized year-round. ATWA certainly supports that motion.

However, the very fact that a Snowmobile Bylaw has to be amended in order to create a truly non-motorized trail in the City of Whitehorse is simply ludicrous. It is also time-consuming, expensive, and lacks common sense.

If you do open up the bylaw as a result of Councillor Cameron's motion, then please consider the amendment that ATWA has proposed, an amendment that in our view will bring clarity and equity to our trail system, end the confusion associated with the definition of *so-called* non-motorized trails, improve safety for all users, improve protection for our trails, and reduce city costs.