

In order to justify the newly built trail located adjacent to the Pee Wee Hill trail, the city needs to both explain how the building of the new trail is going to address the concerns raised about the old Pee Wee Hill trail, and why the solutions proposed by City employees in 2017 that involved widening the trail and reducing the trail's grade, will no longer work in 2021. (See <https://www.activetwa.org/pee-wee-hill-trail.html>.)

The Pee Wee Hill trail will continue to be open to all non-motorized users. It would not be prudent to shut the trail down and commence remediation, as it is a route that *Fire Protection Services* (FPS) can use to access areas above the hill in case of wild fires. A specially designed ATV is currently available for such purposes.

Emergency access for FPS was mentioned by the Riverdale Community Association in its April 2017 Newsletter. Apparently, the city felt that the grading and widening of the trail would facilitate access for both FPS and non-motorized users. (See <https://www.activetwa.org/pee-wee-hill-trail.html>.)

Unfortunately, the new trail "solution" will do nothing to improve access for FPS. As well, all non-motorized users will find the old trail to be as steep, as narrow, and as slippery in certain times of the year, as it has always been.

The degradation of the old trail will continue despite the fact that city administration considers this trail to be unsustainable.

In April of this year ATWA asked city administration to take a look at the Yukon Energy Viewpoint Trail, a trail not open to bikes as it is considered to be a footpath. An associate was concerned that at least one "shortcut trail" had formed on this "switchback-like trail." In addition, there was evidence of erosion and vegetation degradation, and the obvious need for increased signage. (See <https://www.activetwa.org/photos.html> and scroll down.)

This trail has characteristics similar to the new alternate Pee Wee Hill trail, and may have served as an illustration of what can happen to such trails if not properly built and maintained. Unfortunately, nothing was done to address the issues raised.

Instead, in September the city used its time and money to build a new trail that may well face the same issues as the Yukon Energy Viewpoint Trail, as well as those issues raised by city employees in 2017, when they questioned the sustainability of any new trail built in the area due to potential drainage, erosion, and slope stability concerns.

They also felt that yet another trail in the immediate area would be seen as an additional scar on the landscape.

We have yet to hear how the above environmental concerns were addressed in the construction of the new trail.

As well, we fail to see how the new trail will alleviate many of the long-standing problems associated with the Pee Wee Hill area.

Like the old Pee Wee Hill trail, the new trail will also be open to “all” non-motorized users.

Unfortunately, it takes longer to walk to the top of Pee Wee Hill using the new trail.

In some places the new trail appears to be as steep as the old trail. A recent visit suggests that it will be just as slippery in winter conditions. Unlike the old trail it features tight turns, which may not be appreciated by some users. It is also narrower than the old trail.

The new trail is non-directional. In other words, all users can use the trail in both directions.

One can only assume that most trail bikers will go up the new “climbing” trail, but will continue to come down the old Pee Wee Hill trail. This will do nothing to address potential safety concerns that can occur when descending trail bikers (and skiers) meet other users coming up a steep trail which can be very slippery, does not have great sight lines, and has limited room for manoeuvring.

Yet some trail bikers may come down the new trail as they are currently permitted to do so. This could cause additional safety concerns if they meet other users such as walkers or skiers coming up the new trail.

The new trail adds to the myriad of trails in the immediate area. For example, the very steep bike trail called “Hooligans Plunge” is located directly beside the new trail. Adding yet another trail to the mix does nothing to improve the visual landscape.

Strangely enough the new alternate Pee Wee Hill trail does not go to the top of Pee Wee Hill. It actually enters the old trail at two adjacent points a few metres before its top.

The city may need to put a “stop” sign at these points in order to prevent a possible collision between descending bikers on the old trail, and ascending bikers entering the old trail from the new trail. (See <https://www.activetwa.org/photos.html>.)

In 2017, the widening of the old Pee Wee Hill trail and the reduction of the trail’s grade were seen by city staff to be the answers to its many problems.

Unfortunately, in building the new trail the city may have simply added to those problems.

Keith Lay
Active Trails Whitehorse Association
www.activetwa.org
633-4936 (Home)
687-8500 (Mobile)
11/23/2021