

Town Agrees To Remove Bike Trail Fence

By STEPHANIE REITZ

From the Hartford Courant

AVON, Connecticut- The town council has agreed to remove 11,700 feet of chain-link fencing along the Rails-to-Trails path in town.

Residents whose homes abut the path had requested the move.

The fencing, which was installed years ago to ease the security and privacy concerns of some homeowners, is not needed after all and is unattractive, other neighbors told the town council recently.

The paved path was created in the late 1990s along the old Boston & Maine Railroad route. It has become a place where residents go to chat, get exercise and enjoy their community, the nearby homeowners say.

"After years of listening to the choo-choo train going through, it's a pleasure to watch the bikers and walkers go through there," said resident Susan Namerow, whose home abuts the trail. "It seems to be a really friendly situation, and I wouldn't like to see it changed."

Namerow and other residents surveyed homeowners whose property abuts the trail and found that they overwhelmingly supported the removal of the fencing. Town council members responded enthusiastically.

For safety reasons, such as in areas where the ground drops below the trail, the town will replace the chain-link fencing with about 2,690 feet of split-rail fencing.

The overall result should be a more accessible and attractive trail, residents and town officials said.

"I've had utterly no problems with it whatsoever. I agree with my neighbors that the trail is a wonderful thing," said resident William Longstreet, who bought his home from a man who opposed the trail, but then used it as a selling point.

Proximity to the trail has been advertised as an attractive feature in many homes on the market, said Town Planner Steven Kushner.

"They feel the trail is really a significant asset," he said.

Completing the final portion of the trail in Avon was delayed because of a sewer project, but it was finished over the past year, and the first layer of base pavement has been laid.

The final paving is expected to take place this fall, along with the possible addition of mile markers and other signage.

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