
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Province to review options for commuter train services in the CRD

VICTORIA – Based on support from communities across the Capital Regional District, including Langford, Victoria, Esquimalt and View Royal, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will look at options around using the E&N rail line for transit services between Langford and Victoria West.

“There has been strong community support for establishing a commuter service from the West Shore,” said Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Todd Stone. “Previous referendums held in Langford and Colwood showed more than 90% of residents were in favour of the idea. We’re listening to what residents are telling us, and we are excited about the possibilities and want to engage further with the local governments as we work to turn this concept into reality.

“As with any major initiative, the first step is to ensure that this idea meets the criteria for safety, sustainability and affordability, and that it makes good business sense before moving forward.”

The proposal to use a portion of the E&N line for transit service on the 15-kilometre stretch between Westhills in Langford and Vic West has been endorsed by the four communities. The proposal centres on how quickly the population is growing in the region and how the population growth is continuing to cause congestion along Highway 1 into Victoria.

“If feasible, transit service along the E&N corridor from the West Shore would complement the investments we’re making in transit infrastructure in Greater Victoria, including a \$10 million extension to the Douglas Street northbound bus lane, from Tolmie Avenue to the McKenzie interchange project, and the investment in the McKenzie interchange project itself, to address traffic congestion in the region,” added Stone.

A working group, including representatives from the ministry, local government, BC Transit, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (VRTC) and BC Safety Authority, will be established to provide input on a corridor analysis the ministry will be undertaking, which will look at the options and potential opportunities for this part of the E&N rail corridor. The analysis is anticipated to be completed by the summer. As with all transit services in the region, any new service would be seamlessly integrated within the BC Transit system in Greater Victoria and overseen by VRTC.

“We look forward to participating in the study to examine transit opportunities on the corridor,” said BC Transit president and CEO Manuel Achadinha.

“New transportation options are critically important for the economy and social well-being of our growing region,” said Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps. “It makes good sense to explore the potential of using the E&N rail line for moving people between the Westshore and downtown.”

"I thank the Province for taking on this initiative," said View Royal Mayor David Screech. "I believe the use of the E&N corridor is essential in the transportation planning for this region."

"I would like to acknowledge all the assistance the Province has provided to Langford in constructing the numerous infrastructure projects undertaken in our growing community," said Langford Mayor Stew Young. "We welcome the Province's active involvement in the E&N Commuter Rail project to ensure a currently inactive corridor can be used to provide a vital link between Victoria and the vibrant community of Langford."

"There has been concerted effort over a number of years to get this corridor seriously looked at; we are closer than ever now with the support of the Province," said Township of Esquimalt Mayor Barb Desjardins. "The need for another corridor is illustrated every day when unfortunate incidents restrict traffic flow. Thanks to the Province for moving forward on this significant opportunity for improved transit in the region."

The E&N rail line is owned by the Island Corridor Foundation, which has been working for several years to resume passenger rail service on the line. The foundation has expressed its support for the commuter train service proposal between Vic West and Langford.

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