



FINDING  
THE BEST  
PATH  
FORWARD



“CLEAR THE TRACKS” FOR THE E&N RAIL TO TRAIL PROJECT

# Who Are FORT-VI?



## Friends Of Rails to Trails – Vancouver Island

- BC Not-for-Profit Society incorporated Sept 2018 in order to investigate and **encourage the re-purposing of unused Vancouver Island rail lines as multi-use trails**

## Our Vision

- Encourage the preservation and protection of the E&N Railway corridor in perpetuity as a continuous multi-use Active Transportation network connecting communities and First Nations on Vancouver Island.

FORT-VI delivered a petition with more than 3,000 signatures to the BC Legislature in 2018 to support converting the rail corridor to a multi-use trail

FORT-VI is not against rail when economically feasible

# Island Corridor Foundation



- **Formed in 2003** as a non-profit society, **registered as a charity** in Dec 2004
- ICF Members include **14 First Nations and 5 Regional Districts** along the railway right of way.
- ICF have a **contractual relationship with Southern Rail of Vancouver Island (SVI)** to operate the rail

*“The vision of the ICF is to **preserve and use the Corridor** in perpetuity as one continuous corridor **to connect and benefit all Island communities and First Nations** along the corridor”*

# E & N Railway – A Victorian Era Legacy



**1884-88:** Rail built from Victoria to Courtenay by Sir Robert Dunsmuir to support coal/lumber industries and Esquimalt Naval Base

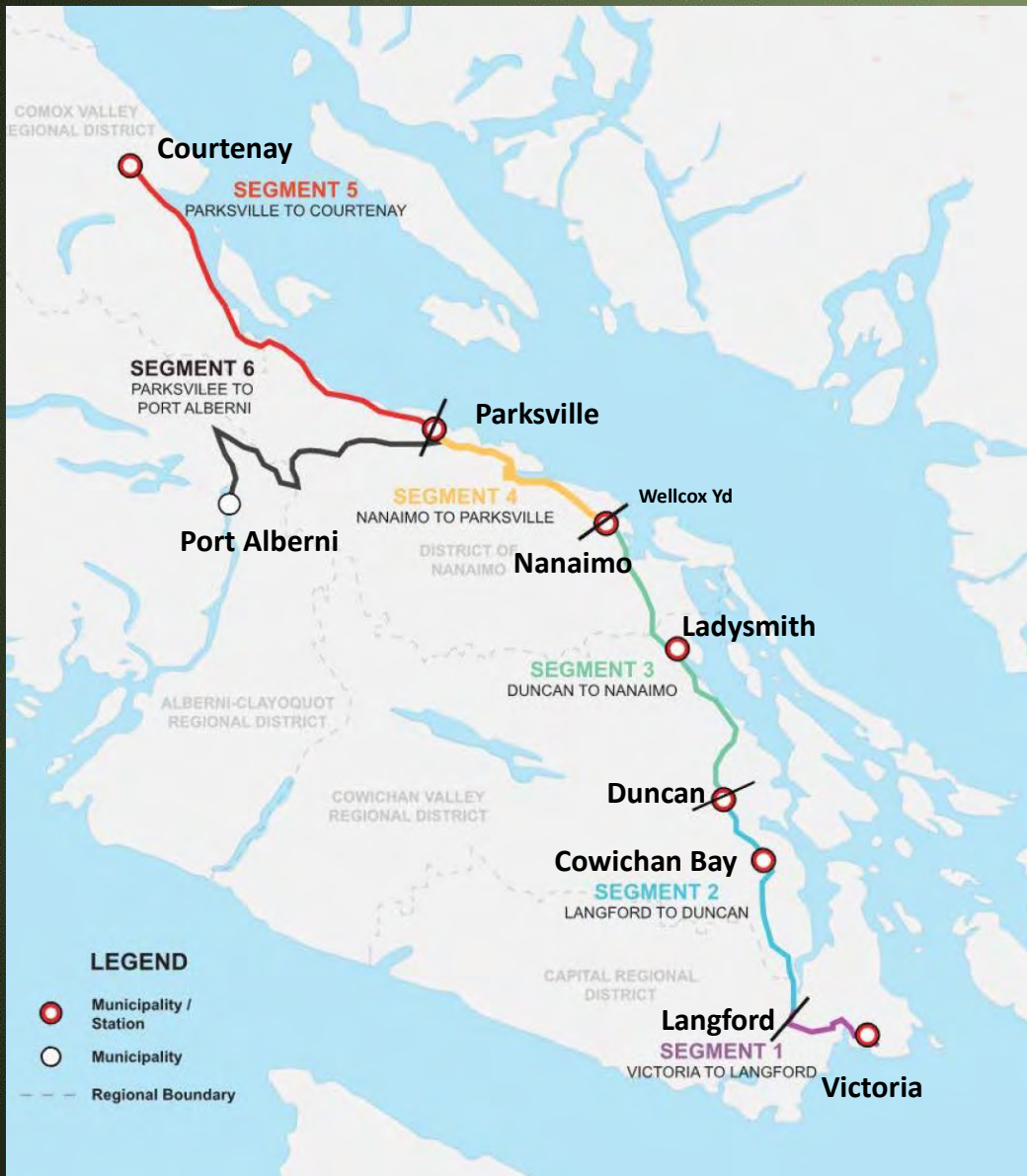
**2005:** ICF acquires the rail corridor in exchange for tax credits of \$360 million to CPR with a vision to preserve the entire contiguous corridor

**2011:** Passenger rail service is discontinued due to safety concerns.

**The railway was designed for low speed, resource-based use in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and is unsuitable for higher-speed commuter use.**



# Overview of Segments



- 224 km Rail Corridor from **Victoria to Courtenay**
- **(207 km from Langford to Courtenay)**
- 236 Level Crossings (112 controlled)
- 64 km spur Parksville to **Port Alberni**
- 5 Regional Districts & 14 First Nations
- 67 Bridges and Trestles
- Minimal rail usage since 2011

# First Nations



First Nations are **crucially important**, and **must** be involved in **decisions** of how to manage the rail right of way **for the future**.

**FORT-VI** are dedicated to the **reconciliation process** and would support working with FN members to **optimise economic opportunities** as well as provide trail developments that are **respectful** of FN needs.

# SOUTH ISLAND TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

(BC MoTI REPORT - SEPT 2020)

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS IN VICTORIA – DUNCAN – SOOKE – SAANICH AREAS  
EXTENSIVE REVIEW OF COMMUTER MODAL OPTIONS: FERRY, RAPID BUS, RAIL, AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

## Highest Priority

### Active Transportation



BC Transit Bus Lanes  
on Trans-Canada and  
Patricia Bay Highways



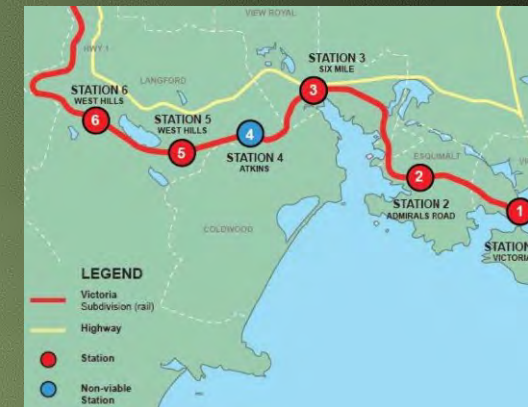
## Lowest Priority

Vic West to Langford  
Commuter Rail (16 km  
on E&N ROW)

**\$595 Million** commuter  
line with five stations

**Only 1,130 estimated daily passengers for 2020**  
Capital Cost = **\$500,000 per daily passenger**

***No mention of rail in the  
report anywhere north of  
Langford!***



# Island Rail Corridor Condition Assessment

(BC MoTI Report April 2020)



- Detailed **assessment and cost analysis** to rebuild corridor for rail use, in 3 Phases.
- Costs **do not include** rolling stock or maintenance buildings.

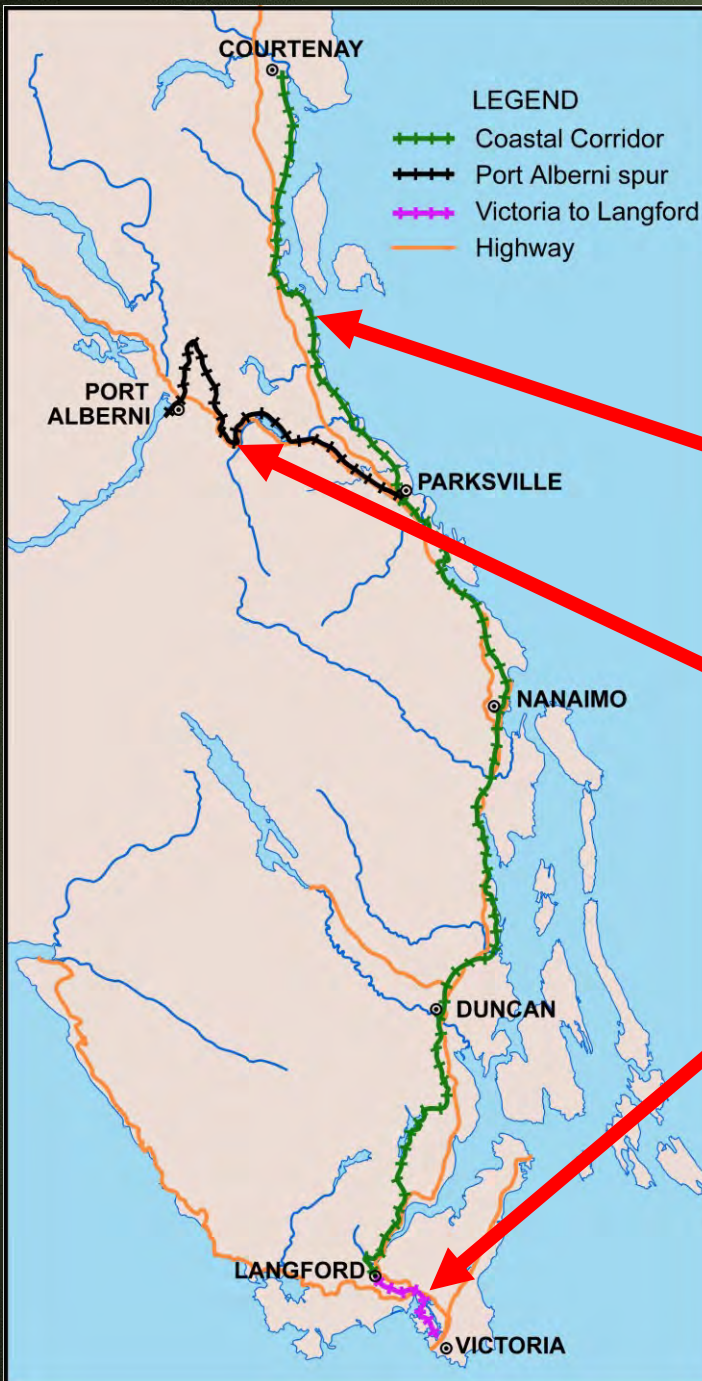
	<b>Passenger</b>	<b>Freight</b>	<b>Speeds</b>	<b>Costs*</b>
	<i>trains/day</i>	<i>cars/day</i>	<i>kph</i>	<i>\$ millions</i>
Phase 1	2-4	20-80	30-50	\$213
Phase 2	4-8	up to 133	65-100	\$377
Phase 3	>8	> 133	65-100	\$513

\* *Costs are for Coastal Corridor only – Langford to Courtenay*



# Island Rail Corridor Condition Assessment (BC MoTI Report April 2020)

## Report Conclusions



- **\$377 Million\*** estimated costs for **Coastal Corridor** to Phase 2 (\$1.8 million per km)
- **\$145 Million** for **Parksville to Port Alberni** (\$2.3 million per km)
- **\$595 Million** for **16 km Commuter Train Victoria to Langford** (\$37 million per km)

*\* for equal comparison purposes the cost of rail from Langford into Victoria has been subtracted*

## Rail With Trail (“RWT”)



- For **RWT**, in order to preserve the tracks and trestles for train traffic, **any trails must be built BESIDE the existing railbed at MUCH HIGHER COST**

# Bridges, Trestles and Malahat Tunnel



- **40 Bridges between Langford and Courtenay** – spanning a total of 2,100m and averaging 50m across
- Another **19 bridges** on the **Port Alberni** spur
- **Average distance between bridges is less than 5km**
- If we consider other obstacles such as steep banks, rock cuts, ravines and wetlands, trail beside rail becomes impractical. ICF have stated that where a trail cannot go beside the rail, **THERE WILL BE NO TRAIL!**



# Existing Trails Beside Rails Within the Corridor

Municipality	Trail	Length (km)
Victoria (CRD)	E&N	12.5
Duncan (CowVRD)	Friendship	1.3
Chemainus-Ladysmith (CowVRD)	Cowichan Valley	9.5
Nanaimo (RDN)	Regional	8.0
Parksville (RDN)	Coombs (7 km)	Not on coastal corridor
Qualicum (RDN)	School Connector	6.0
Courtenay (CmxVRD)	E&N	<u>2.5</u>
		<b>27.3</b>

**Regional districts have paid to build 47 km of trails within the E&N rail corridor, 13 km in Victoria and 27 km along the Coastal Corridor**

# Trails BESIDE Rail = High Costs

Trail		Cost (\$ millions)	Length (km)	\$ Million per KM
Victoria to Langford E&N - Total	6 Bridges	\$36.0	17.4	\$2.1
Victoria to Langford E&N – Phase 3	Millstream Ck	\$3.6	1.0	\$3.6
Nanaimo (Franklyn)	Not built due to high costs	\$6.4	2.0	\$3.2
Saltair Trail	1 Culvert crossing	\$1.7	4.3	\$0.40
Qualicum (Hemsworth)	Upgrade of existing trail	\$0.35	1.4	\$0.25
Coombs	No bridges	\$3.8	7.0	\$0.54
Chemainus	2 road crossings, no bridges	\$2.23	7.4	\$0.30

Victoria/Nanaimo costs are \$2-3 million per km

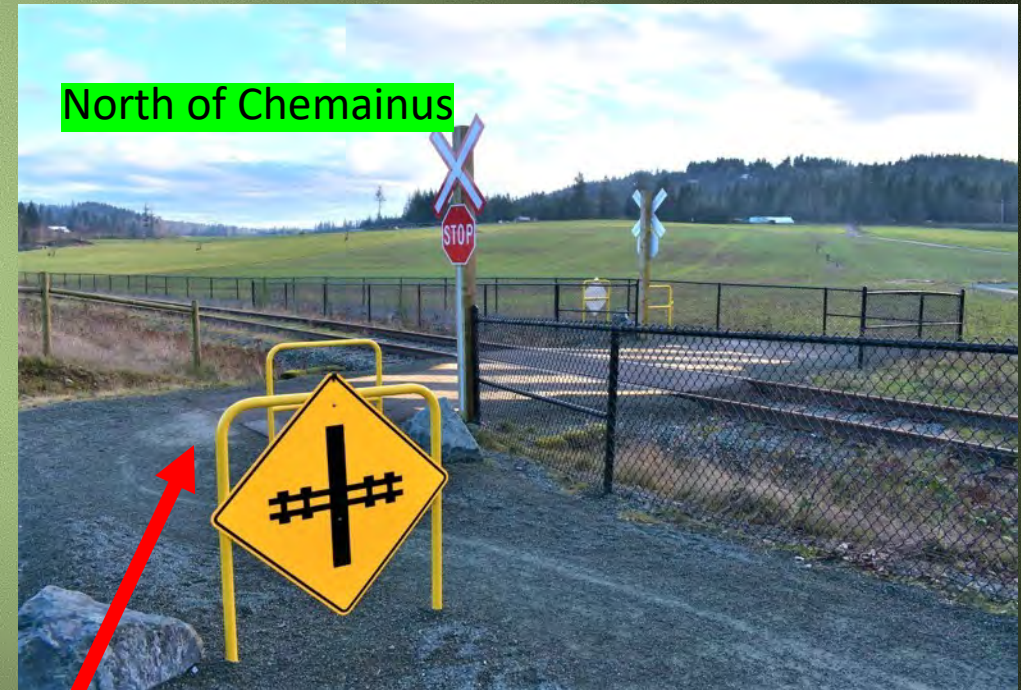
Lowest cost areas (without bridges) still average over \$400,000 per km

# Why Are Costs So High to Leave Rail in Place?

Low Areas Beside Tracks  
Require Addition Of Bridges



Fences And Rail Crossings  
Are Expensive



Not Needed if Trail Built on Rail Bed!

# Rail Beside Trail – Victoria Area



Far less burden on taxpayers to use the rail bed for trails!

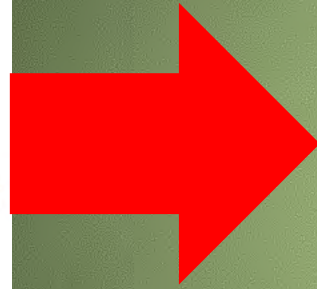


- Capital Region District (Victoria) has constructed 13km of a planned **17 km E&N Rail Trail** pathway from Esquimalt to Langford
- Trail cost is **\$36M = \$2.1M per km**
- Numerous **expensive issues** to provide connectivity due to **bridges, wet areas and FN lands**
- **1km** section to cross **Millstream Creek** cost **\$3.6M**

Extrapolating E&N Rail with Trail costs of **\$2.1 M per km** for the remaining **180 km** Langford to Courtenay section would require **\$378 Million of taxpayer money!**

# Current ICF “Rails With Trails” Business Strategy???

*Langford to Courtenay (207km)*



**Taxpayer  
Money**

Railway Rebuild (as per MoTI 2020 study)	\$377 Million
Trail Construction (\$2.1M per km x 180 km)	<u>\$378 Million</u>
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>\$755 Million</b>
Annual Passenger Rail Subsidies	>\$1.5 Million per year

- No mention of trails in the ICF Business Case? Construction of trails beside rail has historically cost \$2.1 million per km. With 180 km yet to build, this represents **\$378 Million!**



# Rail To Trail (“R2T”)



Kinsol Trestle – Cowichan Valley Trail

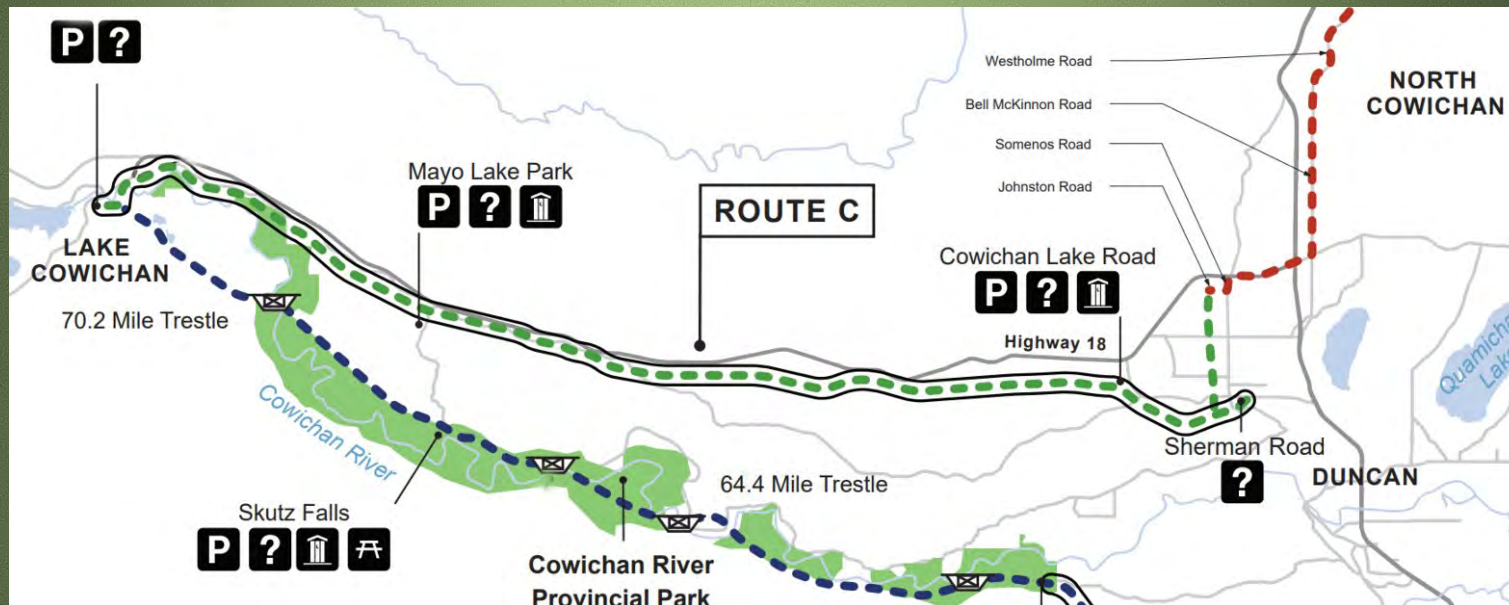


Galloping Goose Trail

- **R2T** allows the use of the existing railbed which results in **better connectivity**, **simplified construction**, **reduced capital and maintenance costs** and a **more natural environment** for enjoyment of users

# Cowichan Valley “Rail to Trail” Example

In 2011, **26 km of unused rail bed** between Lake Cowichan and Duncan was **converted to multi-use trail** (“Route C” shown below)



Entire Cost was \$0.8 million = Only \$30,000 per km

# Building an Efficient Trail...

for **\$30,000 per km** versus

**\$300,000 - \$3,000,000 per km** for RWT



Even with some less than optimal construction conditions



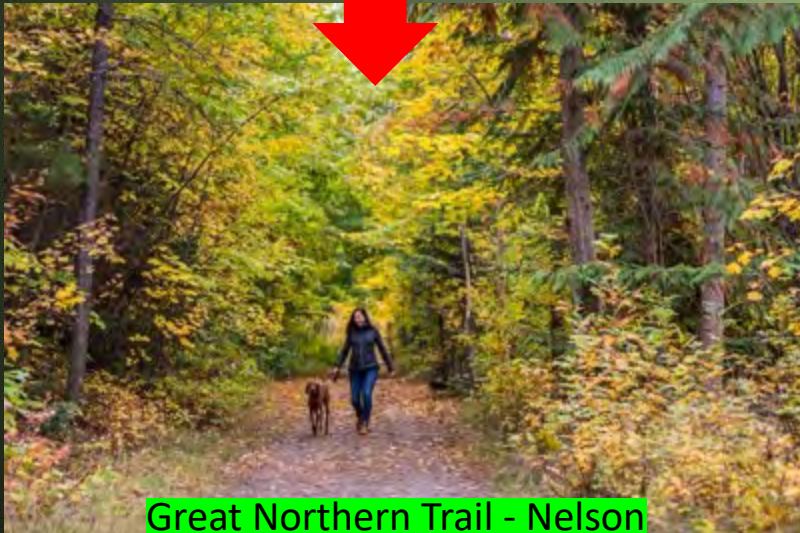
Completed at **10%** of even the **lowest cost** for Rail Beside Trail

# Coastal Corridor - Rails To Trails Cost Estimate

Langford to Courtenay -207 km (180 km of trail yet to build)



Island Corridor near Cobble Hill



Great Northern Trail - Nelson

- **Trail construction** involves removing rails and ties, grading, and then spreading surface material as needed
  - estimated cost at \$200,000 per km\* x 180 km = **\$36 M**
  - **Salvage value** of rails at \$500/ton = **\$13 M**
  - **Total ESTIMATED cost of Rail to Trail = \$23 M**
- Annual maintenance costs would be minimal – covered by revenues from right of way agreements combined with volunteer work

*\* Although Cowichan Valley Trail was only \$30,000 per km to complete, we are using high estimates to be cautious until a more thorough evaluation can be performed.*

# Scorecard...

Rail to Trail meets all BC government goals in regards to active transportation, carbon emissions, tourism and reconciliation

	<u>Rail "With" Trail</u>	<u>Rail "To" Trail</u>
Rail Construction Cost	\$500 M	Nil
Trail Construction Cost	<u>\$500 M</u>	<u>&lt; \$40 M</u>
Total Cost (estimated)	<b>\$1,000 M</b>	✓ <b>&lt; \$40 M</b>
Annual Rail Subsidies	\$3.5 M	✓ Nil
Environmental	GHG, Noise	✓ Natural
First Nations Reconciliation	Further Legal Actions	✓ Opportunities
Safety	High Liability	✓ Quiet and Safe
Connectivity	Disjointed	✓ Continuous
Timing	Wait for \$1B....	✓ Near Term



# Benefits of Trails

## Connectivity

- 21 sites/**settlements** on the coastal **corridor** are only **11 km apart** on average with maximum of 19 km
- These **distances are readily travelled on a bike**, especially an **e-bike!**
- **Slopes less than 3%** allow all physical abilities

## BC Tourism Strategy

- **Support people and communities**
- **Sustainably grow the local and visitor economy**
- **Respect nature and environment**

## Numerous opportunities for businesses - tourism, commuter, outdoor...

- food & beverage, campgrounds, lodgings, tour guiding, etc
- increased traffic to support existing shops and ventures
- **physical and mental health benefits of outdoor exercise**

## Public Transit Directions

Federal and Provincial funding strongly support BC Transit low emissions options

- **BC Transit** plans to have a **fully electric bus fleet by 2040**
- All **new BC Transit bus purchases after 2022 to be electric**
- \$377M required to rebuild rail on Coastal Corridor  
**could purchase over 300 electric buses!**  
(\$1.2M per bus and dropping...)



**Electric buses provide more flexible public transit service for far less capital cost and less GHG emissions than diesel trains**

# Greenhouse Gases – Climate Change



- BC has **banned the sale of internal combustion cars** by 2040 – low emissions vehicles will be mainstream before a rail line can be funded and rebuilt
- **Electric semis** provide an **emerging alternative for short-haul freight** with many firms planning production (**Volvo, Daimler, Tesla, etc.**)
- **No economic viability to electrify island trains** (third rail too dangerous with public access) – **trains would run on fossil fuels**





## We Have an Opportunity to Think Differently

*Times have changed drastically since ICF was formed in 2003...*

- **Mining and forestry** have **declined or disappeared** in most parts of the Island (biggest user of freight in the past)
- Attitudes and understanding of **GHG effects** – making better choices
- **Active transportation** has boomed, **e-bikes** are EVERYWHERE!
- **Technology** has changed (**electric vehicles**, remote/**virtual workplaces**)



**Decision makers** should be **highly commended** for being instrumental in **protecting the rail corridor**; however, **it is time to embrace a more forward-thinking use of the now derelict rail bed**

# 2019-20 UVIC Studies – Rail to Trail

*Two studies completed by Alli Cano, MPA and Lynda Gagne, PhD*



Results of over **800 survey respondents** emphasize that long-distance, continuous, active transportation **trails are desirable** – and people are **willing to pay reasonable amounts** for that infrastructure

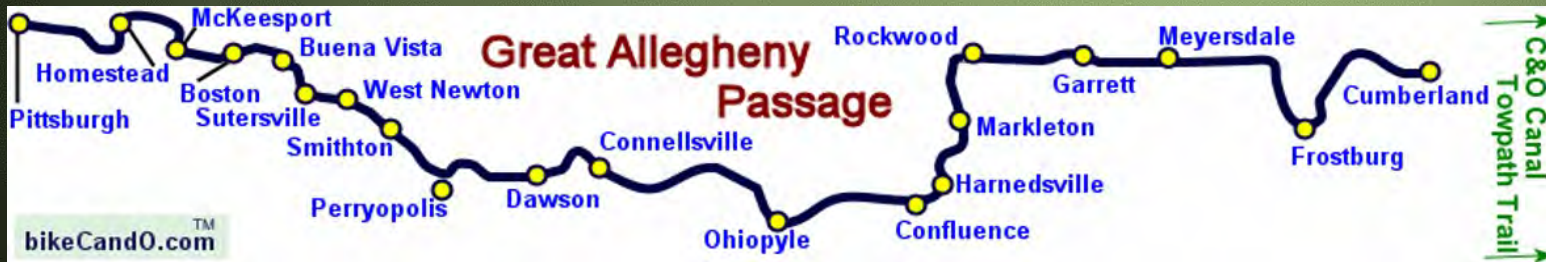
<u>Topic</u>	<u>Response</u>
I prefer trails due to air quality, safety and their natural, quiet environment	80-90%
Trail systems are very or extremely important to my desired lifestyle	Over 90%
A long-distance trail system would influence my travel plans	85%
Trail continuity is important	93%
I am willing to pay \$30-\$50 (or more) per year to support trail construction*	77%

# Pennsylvania GAP – “Great Allegheny Passage”

Tourism and Economic Benefits Comparison



- Similar in length and settlement pattern to the E&N (241 km, 37 settlements, population 640,000)
- The trail is estimated to draw **1 Million visitors a year**



Understanding the **ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE GAP**

**\$121 Million** Total Economic Impacts in 2019

Regional Impact from GAP Tourism

**\$74.7 Million** Direct Impacts

Spending by GAP tourists at businesses in the Trail Impact Zone

**\$21.6 Million** Indirect Impacts

Secondary purchases from businesses in the GAP region

**\$24.9 Million** Induced Impacts

Household spending from income generated by direct and indirect impacts in the GAP region

**\$800,000** Annual Economic Impact per Mile

Staring at the crushed limestone path as it weaves through woods and farms, it may not feel like you're traveling on a what is effectively an economic highway, but the GAP generates more than \$800,000 per mile in economic value!

"I am amazed at the economic development surrounding trails. To come back into office and to see the magnitude of the impact that [the GAP] is having has been truly amazing."

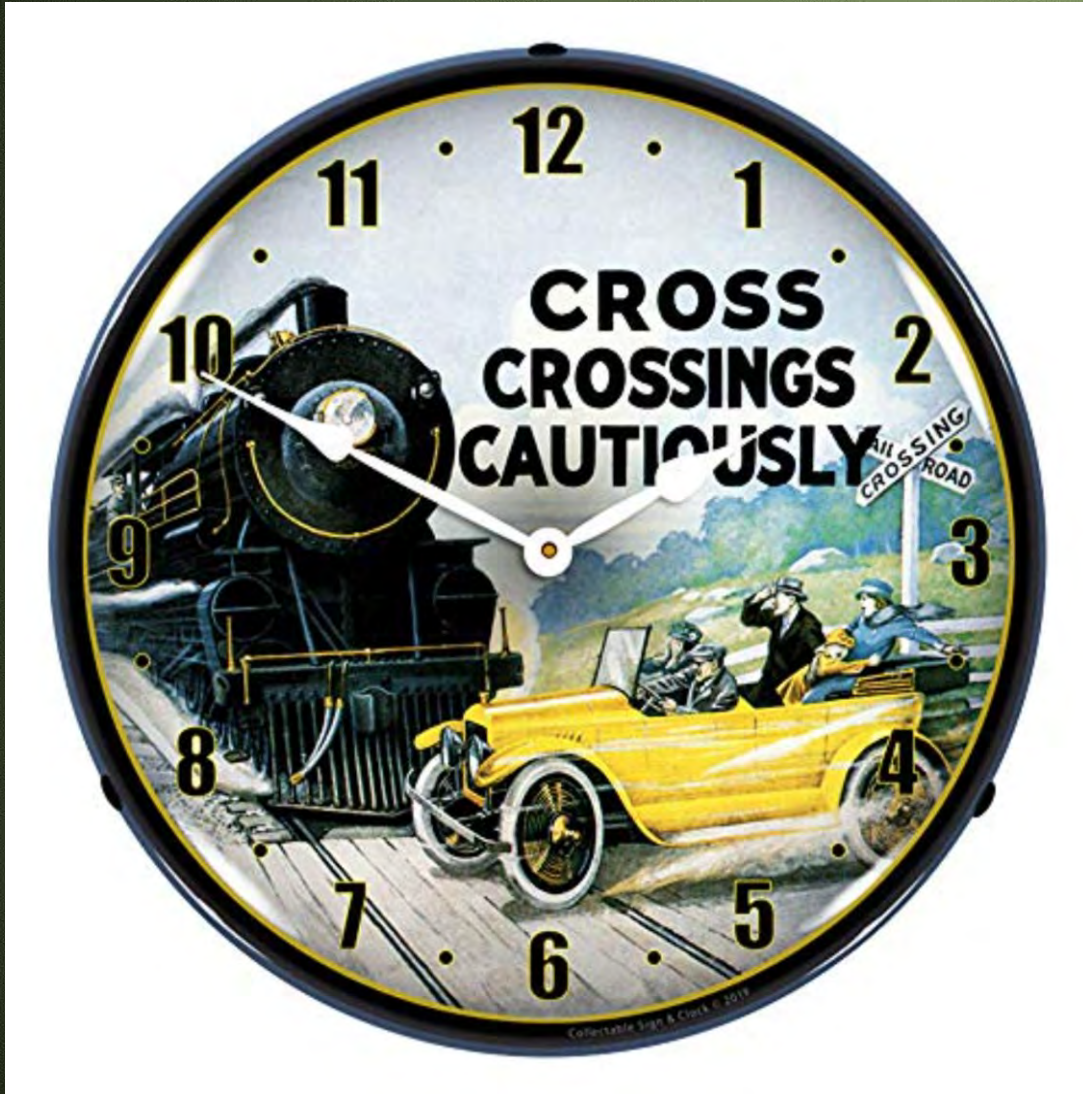
**Pam Tokar-Ickes**  
Somerset County Commissioner

**\$52.6 Million** Labor Income

While the stereotype of employment based on recreational tourism may call to mind lower-wage and often seasonal jobs, our estimates suggest the average annual wage among GAP-supported jobs is \$38K. This suggests that **the GAP supports many living-wage jobs.** If the GAP were a private employer, it would be among the largest in the region.

**1,393 Jobs**

# THE CLOCK IS TICKING - IT'S CRUNCH TIME FOR ICF!



- **DEADLINE MARCH 14, 2023**
- “I consider a period of 18 months from the date of this judgment sufficient for Canada to determine whether it will approve funding for infrastructure improvements on the segment of the corridor that includes the SFN Reserve. If it determines not to approve funding, or does not make a determination on or before that time, the appellant will be entitled to return to court to enforce its right of reversion.”

# MEANWHILE AT FORT-VI

- **THE FEASIBILITY STUDY BEGINS (working on a great PLAN B)**

- Successful grant application for \$45,000 Federal ATF.

The project involves preparing a high level cost estimate for converting the rail corridor to an active transportation trail, assessing economic impacts, estimating visitors and residents demands on the proposed trail, reviewing and commenting on the alignment of the project with government policies.

(\$400,000,000 total Active Transportation Fund available over 3 years)

- **To be completed by January 31, 2023**

# Views Along the Corridor

Finlayson Arm





Bright Angel Park  
Cobble Hill

Mount Prevost  
Duncan





Green Lake  
Nanaimo





Nanoose Bay

Englishman  
River





Tsable River  
Trestle

## Just Like Mom's Bakery, Union Bay



## Current status near Shawnigan Lake



## What Can You Do?



- Get/stay connected with FORT-VI
- Contact your Regional District Directors and encourage them to push for conversion of Rails to Trails
- Contact local government reps, Ministers, your MLA and MP to let them know you support the rapid conversion of the derelict E and N rail bed into a world class active transportation corridor.

## Get Connected with FORT-VI

Visit our website at [www.fortvi.ca](http://www.fortvi.ca)

- Click in top right corner to **follow us on Facebook and Twitter**
- Keep up to date - **subscribe to our newsletter**
- **Become a FORT-VI member**, only \$5 per year
- Make a **donation**