

MEDIA RELEASE

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LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDED AS SOLUTION FOR RAPID TRANSIT FROM VICTORIA TO WEST SHORE COMMUNITIES

VICTORIA, B.C. – Based on extensive public consultation and detailed analysis, Light Rail Transit (LRT) has been identified as the preferred technology that will meet the goals and objectives of the Victoria Regional Rapid Transit Project.

“To meet the goals of the public and local government, LRT has been identified as the preferred technology for rapid transit,” said Manuel Achadinha, BC Transit President and CEO.

When the project first began in late 2008, local government partners and the public agreed to the project goals and objectives:

- increase market share from 7% to 12% by 2030, nearly doubling ridership to 55 million passengers per year,
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help achieve the Provincial Transit Plan target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air contaminants from cars by 4.7 million tonnes by 2020,
- encourage effective land use and
- create an efficient and reliable system.

LRT was found to have the capacity to achieve the project’s goals, deliver the most long-term benefits for the Capital Region and had the highest level of community support.

From surveys to open houses, public participation has been extensive. BC Transit’s significant consultation efforts ensured that the project scope, alignment and vehicle technology reflected the requirements, preferences, and priorities of the community.

“Consultation has been the cornerstone of this project,” said Achadinha. “This has included the public, businesses and local government.”

Providing information and obtaining feedback from the public included over 100 meetings, 5 rounds of open houses, online surveys, a project website, social media, media interviews and a business and customer survey between Uptown and downtown Victoria. A Community Liaison Committee was also formed, which includes 36 representatives from groups such as local government, municipalities, businesses, transportation groups, and schools.

The sixth round of open houses continues this May to present the detailed analysis, results, and to obtain feedback from the public on the final recommendation. Three options were evaluated: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rapid Transit (LRT), and business-as-usual (maintaining existing service with the expectation that transit priority improvements would be implemented in the future, such as HOV lanes and traffic signal priority).

The general public is invited to attend either session:

- Wednesday, May 4, 12:00 to 7:00 p.m., #1 Centennial Square, Victoria City Hall
- Thursday, May 5, 3:00 to 8:00 p.m., 1767 Island Highway, Juan de Fuca Kinsmen Fieldhouse (lower level of Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre)

Since 2008, the project has been undertaken as a partnership between the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Capital Regional District, and BC Transit.

In 2010, the rapid transit alignment was approved and endorsed by all directly-affected municipalities (Victoria, Saanich, View Royal, Colwood and Langford), the Victoria Regional Transit Commission and approved by the Board of Directors. The alignment follows Douglas Street between downtown Victoria and Uptown in Saanich, then runs parallel to the Trans-Canada Highway and the Galloping Goose Trail to 6 Mile/Colwood Interchange, along the Island Highway to Colwood City Centre, then into Station Avenue in Langford via Goldstream Avenue.

In May 2011, the business case with the recommended technology will be submitted to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission for endorsement and then to the BC Transit Board of Directors for approval in May. If approved, the business case will be submitted to the Province of BC in June. The timeline for the project will be finalized once BC Transit receives approval and funding for the project.

The cost of the preferred technology along the entire alignment is estimated at \$950 million.

Rapid transit is a higher level of transit service designed to improve travel time, reliability, passenger comfort and convenience along an exclusive right-of-way. A rapid transit system provides frequent, high-capacity service that runs all day, every day.

The Victoria Regional Rapid Transit Project was created to develop rapid transit options that provide a safe, attractive, convenient, reliable and green alternative to automobile travel in the Capital Region, beginning with connections to the West Shore.

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