



The Corridor Dispatch

VOL. 1 • RESULTS EDITION GENERAL LOCAL ELECTIONS • OCT 17, 2026

VICTORIA → CAMPBELL RIVER

ELECTED, IN THEIR OWN WORDS

On October 17, Vancouver Islanders chose the mayors, councillors and regional directors who will steer the Island Rail Corridor through the next four years. 56 of them told the Restore Island Rail Society, before the vote, that they support bringing passenger rail back.

This edition gathers every elected candidate who answered the Society's questionnaire, riding by riding, south to north, with the statement each one gave us during the campaign. These are the people to hold to their word.

Preliminary results. Winners are taken from preliminary results published by municipalities, regional districts and local news between October 17 and 19, 2026. Official declarations are due October 21, and very close races may still change on a recount.

A note on scope: statements cover the Island Rail Corridor only. They are not an endorsement of any official's broader platform. Officials who did not return the questionnaire are not listed.

56

Rail supporters elected

7

Mayors among them

24

Municipalities and electoral areas

THE LINE, SOUTH TO NORTH

1

Capital
Regional District
24 elected

2

Cowichan Valley
Regional District
8 elected

3

Regional District
of Nanaimo
12 elected

4

Comox Valley
Regional District
7 elected

5

Alberni-
Clayoquot
Regional District
3 elected

6

Strathcona
Regional District
2 elected

FIND YOUR RIDING

Victoria

4 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Esquimalt

4 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Sooke

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Nanaimo

8 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Area A · Baynes Sound / Denman & Hornby Islands

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Port Alberni

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Oak Bay

3 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

View Royal

4 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Duncan

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Lantzville

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Cumberland

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Ucluelet

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Saanich

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Colwood

3 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

North Cowichan

4 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Parksville

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Courtenay

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Campbell River

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

North Saanich

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Langford

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Ladysmith

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Qualicum Beach

2 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Comox

3 RAIL SUPPORTERS
ELECTED

Area D · Oyster Bay / Buttle Lake

1 RAIL SUPPORTER ELECTED

Capital Regional District

VICTORIA • OAK BAY • SAANICH • NORTH SAANICH • ESQUIMALT • VIEW ROYAL • COLWOOD •
LANGFORD • SOOKE

24 elected

■ Victoria

4 ELECTED

Jeremy Caradonna COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I'm fortunate to have served as a Victoria City Councillor, CRD Director, and Victoria Regional Transit Commissioner, and in all of those capacities I've been able to support the advancement of rail in this region. In the South Island, we truly have an historic opportunity to restore rail service, either on the E&N line, via the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative, or along Highway 1, as part of a new alignment to the West Shore planned by BC Transit. Right now, the E&N looks more promising, but I am committing to advancing both projects at this time. Service from Victoria to Langford would also hold out the future possibility of connecting to up-island rail service in the future. We should all be excited about the prospects of solving the Colwood crawl.

Matt Dell COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I have served on Victoria Council since 2022 and am a strong advocate for better transportation systems around the CRD and on the Island. As a young parent, I'm committed to building transportation systems that can help us reduce emissions, create more flexibility for residents, and build a long-term vision for the Island. I'm supportive of rapid bus, light rail, long-haul rail and sustainable options like bike lanes and mobility pathways. I would also like to ensure that transit planning is done alongside land-use planning, to ensure that we are adding housing supply near to key transit corridors. I'm proud to be running for re-election in 2026, as I've thoroughly enjoyed serving on council.

Jack Sandor COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Fast, frequent, and reliable rail transit is an absolute necessity for Victoria, the CRD, and the island as a whole. All levels of government must be doing everything possible to get trains running again. The benefits to traffic, the climate, the economy, and so much more would be absolutely immense. If elected, I will do everything in the city's power to make this a reality.

Dave Thompson COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Decisions we make today will shape air quality, affordability, and livability for decades to come. I've been working for decades for strong, multi-modal transportation systems that includes rail and other sustainable modes, including since 2022 as a Victoria City Councillor and CRD Director and on the Transportation Committee. I urge residents to think of the medium- and long-term future of this city, region and island. Do we want more traffic, or do we want more safe, convenient, clean and pleasant transportation options?

■ **Oak Bay**

3 ELECTED

Hazel Braithwaite COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I believe the Island Rail Corridor is an important piece of Vancouver Island's transportation infrastructure and one we should be careful to preserve for future generations. I recognize that restoring rail service is a significant undertaking involving several levels of government and substantial investment. I support keeping the opportunity open and looking at practical, phased and sustainable transportation solutions for our region.

Cairine Green COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I support the concept of light rail transportation for Vancouver Island, that links the communities from Victoria to Port Hardy. One only has to witness the significant growth of Southern Vancouver Island, the increased traffic congestion and the hazards of negotiating the Island Highway during all seasons, to realize that light rail transportation makes such good sense for all of the communities it would serve. It would mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and contribute to improved public health and safety over the long term. Efficient, safe and effective rail service would be a boon to travel, local economies and the movement of people, goods and services up and down Vancouver Island.

Roxanne Helme COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I have travelled the train since I was a child. Travelling between Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver by train to visit grandparents was something that I remember regularly looking forward to. As an adult, I have travelled on the train in China, Europe and Asia. Unfortunately I was never a passenger on the E and N Railway and recall my disappointment when the service was discontinued. In my experience the train is nothing short of a magical mode of transportation.

I come from the position that the availability of train transport is an invaluable asset for any population. The loss of the Island Corridor is in my opinion something that simply cannot be permitted. I can assure you that I come from a place that values rail and in the "cost benefit analysis" inevitably required, I am someone who recognizes, in addition to the obvious "monetary" benefits, the significant "non monetary" benefits of rail.

Teale Phelps Bondaroff COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Rail can be an incredibly important part of a complete, interconnected transportation system that gives people real options for getting around. This term, I worked to set up a Student Youth Council as a pilot project in the District. This amazing group of young people explored various issues and settled on transportation as a priority, with island rail as a central component. We heard a presentation from the good folks at the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative, and the students prepared a motion calling on Saanich Council to endorse, in principle, the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative. The motion also included advocacy components writing to higher levels of government. I was pleased to present this motion to Saanich Council this summer, and am very happy that it passed unanimously. I very much support continuing the conversation around bringing rail to Vancouver Island, a project that requires long-term vision and collaboration between many levels of local government. We already have this incredible asset in our region, and need to work together as a region to provide people with rail as a fantastic, convenient and sustainable transportation option.

Colin Plant COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I strongly support the restoration of rail service on Vancouver Island and believe the Island Rail Corridor is an important transportation asset that we need to preserve and plan for over the long term.

Our transportation system cannot be based entirely on automobiles and highways. Vancouver Island is growing, and we need a range of transportation options that can move people and goods safely and efficiently.

I also think we need to take the long view. Infrastructure decisions made today will affect transportation choices for generations. Preserving the rail corridor gives us an opportunity to develop rail when demand, technology and funding make different forms of service viable.

Stuart Mackinnon COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Transportation is a key issue for us, as we have very poor public transit and very limited pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Because of BC Transit's short-sighted planning, it is almost a necessity to have a car anywhere north of Mills Rd in North Saanich.

One day, I am sure we will have rapid transit to the airport and ferry terminal, but in the meantime, we need to make good decisions to prepare for it.

As for the island corridor, as a region, we must restore the train route to Nanaimo and beyond. For anyone travelling between up-island and the Victoria region, it is nearly impossible on public transit. Rapid transit to the western communities is well past its due date. The CRD can be a leader in restoring these transit corridors.

We must partner with First Nation communities, local governments, and the Province to restore island rail and promote public transportation.

■ Esquimalt

Duncan Cavens MAYOR-ELECT

“

Rail is very much a use-it-or-lose-it asset, and we are slowly losing it. Continued investment over time is likely to be much cheaper than trying to recreate the infrastructure after it is gone. This is particularly important for Esquimalt. The E&N corridor runs through our municipality and could provide an important alternative for people commuting to CFB Esquimalt and other major employers in the area. Making rail work will require cooperation between local governments, the CRD, BC Transit and First Nations along the corridor. First Nations need to be partners in those discussions, particularly given the history of railway decisions and the fact that the corridor bisects their communities and lands in many places.

“

I believe Vancouver Island rail should be a priority. Rail is my preference, but I also believe in a phased approach. It doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing proposition, and if full rail isn't achievable right away, we should look at how we can make better use of the corridor — whether that is rubber-to-rail, improved bus service or another form of rapid transit.

What I don't want is another study that simply puts us further down the road. In my 18 years on Council, I've seen enough reports to wallpaper a room. We already know the corridor is an important transportation asset. The argument I continue to hear from higher levels of government is that we don't have the population to support rail. My response is that infrastructure takes years to plan, fund and build. We need to be thinking about where we are going, not just where we are today.

Transportation planning also needs to be connected to how we plan our communities. Housing, transit exchanges, bus routes, rail, walking and cycling networks all need to work together. People don't travel according to municipal boundaries, so we need to think regionally and island-wide when making these decisions.

Ultimately, this is about giving people real choices. Taking cars off the road — including cars sitting and idling in traffic — can help with congestion, road wear and tear and our climate goals. Even with EVs, there are costs associated with building and maintaining roads, parking, insurance and collisions. A reliable regional transportation system can help address all of those pressures.

I also think we need to be very careful about removing the rail infrastructure. Once that opportunity is gone, getting it back would be enormously difficult and potentially very expensive. We should preserve the corridor, use it where we can now, and continue working toward the long-term vision rather than waiting for the perfect solution before we do anything.

Holly Courtright COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Travelling through Japan showed me what becomes possible when trains, buses, walking routes and local transportation are designed as one system. In Medellín, Colombia, I saw that same principle applied in a completely different way: gondolas connect hillside communities to the metro and the rest of the city. The technology was different, but the thinking was the same. Start with where people live and where they need to go, then connect the pieces.

That is how we should approach transportation on Vancouver Island. Rail will not reach every neighbourhood or replace buses, trails and cycling routes. It can, however, become the backbone that connects them. We already have a corridor linking many of our communities. Protecting it and planning around it gives us an opportunity that would be extraordinarily difficult and expensive to recreate once it is gone.

Tim Morrison COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I have travelled extensively throughout the world to nearly 90 countries on six continents. Many of my journeys have been by rail as much of the world values the importance of railway transportation. Here, on Vancouver Island, however we have lost our vital connection to passenger and freight services by rail and we need to collectively work together to restore it before we lose it forever. In the Township of Esquimalt, we have a restored rail stop in place at the entrance to one of the island's major employers, CFB Esquimalt and Seaspan Dockyard. Sadly, that stop has remained unused without the rail service that could greatly help reduce commuter traffic in and out of Esquimalt. Traffic congestion is just one of the many issues that restoring rail could help address along with providing more environmentally friendly transportation, economic development and tourism growth. The rest of the world greatly value their railway systems and we on Vancouver Island need to do the same.

Volker Dammann MAYOR-ELECT

“

I would make preserving the Island Rail Corridor and seriously assessing the restoration of rail service a priority in our long-term transportation planning.

I grew up in Germany, where an extensive rail network connects communities and neighbouring countries. That experience shaped my appreciation for rail's role in moving people and goods, and I would like to see its potential given serious consideration here on Vancouver Island.

For View Royal, I would make it a priority to work with neighbouring municipalities, First Nations, and senior governments to assess what a viable service could look like. That includes who it would serve, how it would connect with buses and other transportation options, and what it would cost to restore and operate.

Rail has the potential to reduce pressure on our roads and provide another way to move people and goods. Before committing municipal funding, however, I would want a credible plan with clear benefits, realistic passenger and freight demand projections, and confirmed funding partners.

This is a regional undertaking that View Royal cannot deliver alone. My commitment would be to advocate for a coordinated [statement as published continues on the candidate's linked platform page]

Don Brown COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I fully support the restoration of Island rail. It is important to take more trucks and commuter traffic off our highways. This will result in more efficient movement of people and supplies and reduce greenhouse emissions.

Rail will be a big boost to our economies and provide many short term and permanent employment opportunities. Rail will help move goods and materials in a more cost efficient manner. It will also boost our tourism industry. I will do whatever I can to support the reactivation of Island rail.

Sacha Christensen COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I strongly support restoring rail service across Vancouver Island, especially commuter service within our region! View Royal is the bridge between the Westshore and the rest of Greater Victoria, with thousands of commuters every single day who've been priced out of homes in Victoria, Oak Bay, and Saanich. Commuter rail service is one of the ways we can alleviate congestion, ease immediate housing pressure by expanding feasible commuting distances, reduce vehicle emissions, and make our region more livable for everyone!

Carolynne Clark COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I support restoration of the rail network as demands on our existing commuting infrastructure will continue to grow, but I also want decisions made carefully, with safety, environmental impacts, financial responsibility, and integration with our existing active-transportation networks all considered.

Doug Kobayashi MAYOR-ELECT

“

I strongly support the restoration and preservation of the Island Rail Corridor as a vital long-term transportation asset for Vancouver Island, providing sustainable, reliable, and connected transportation options for generations to come.

Eugene Tseng COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I live in Colwood with my wife and our two young children. On the days I drive to my office in Victoria and drop my daughter at daycare on the way, my commute regularly runs over an hour. I've knocked on more than 2,000 doors across Colwood, and traffic comes up in almost every conversation. The Island Rail Corridor could be part of the solution. I'm glad to see the feasibility and technical work now underway, and I look forward to working with regional partners to move people and goods more efficiently.

Ian Ward COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

The Island Rail Corridor represents a significant asset that can strategically address the movement of people and goods well into the future. We need to think long term about capacity, safety and efficiency; the rail corridor addresses all of these issues. We cannot build more highway lanes to deal with this (due to the concept of induced demand), just look at Toronto's 401 and its never-ending need for expansion. Move people by rail and you can move more people faster, safer and on time!

Stew Young MAYOR-ELECT

“

I fully support restore island rail. Let's get a commuter train running on the E&N

Brandy Gordon COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I'm Brandy Gordon, and I'm running for Langford City Council because I believe our community deserves thoughtful leadership and practical solutions. As a child, I have fond memories of taking the Island Rail on school field trips and day trips up Island. I'd love to see future generations have the opportunity to experience that again as part of a practical, long term transportation strategy.

Transportation is one of the biggest issues facing our region, and no single municipality can solve it alone. I support working collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities, the Province, BC Transit, and regional partners to improve regional mobility. I believe all transportation options, including island rail, should be considered as part of a long term, integrated strategy that serves future generations.

Katherine Strongwind COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I support continued exploration of Island Rail, provided that all First Nations, including T'Sou ke and Sc'ianew Nation, are fully engaged and supportive of the project. Their leadership and consent are essential for any transportation initiative that affects their territories and long term planning priorities.

A strong, multi channel transportation system would benefit Sooke by improving regional mobility and reducing pressure on Highway 14. When rail, bus and trail networks work together, they create more reliable options for people who travel across the Island for work, education, health care and recreation. Even though rail may not run through Sooke (I would be interested in exploring that!), a connected regional system can reduce congestion, shorten travel times and support safer and more predictable movement for residents. It also strengthens our ability to advocate for better bus service, active transportation corridors, and provincial investment in our significant transportation challenges.

A cohesive transportation network helps Sooke participate in a more resilient and sustainable regional future. It supports economic development, improves access to services and creates real alternatives to driving. I believe Sooke would benefit from a co-developed, coordinated transportation system rather than a collection of isolated projects. I would be excited to contribute to that as a member of Sooke Council.

■ Duncan

2 ELECTED

Jenni Capps COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I'm a lifelong Duncanite, a two-term councillor, and a rail supporter who would take the train frequently if it was still running! I was raised in a car-free household for most of my life, and as a longtime pedestrian and transit user, I completely understand how crucial high-quality interconnected transportation systems are. I've supported previous advocacy efforts to restore rail to the island, and if re-elected, would continue to do so. After eight years on council, I thoroughly understand how municipal planning can impact and support the future implementation of passenger rail and other diverse transportation options. I continue to hope we can achieve an efficient, economically viable, environmentally friendly rail system on Vancouver Island; and will be a consistent voice in favour of this vision at the council table.

Bernice Timmer COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I am supportive of rail for Vancouver Island. We need to plan for the future and not kick these decisions down the road for the next generation to deal with. The population is growing, and more homes are being built. This means more traffic and more cars, and this does not feel sustainable as anyone caught on the Malahat in a closure will tell you. We also need to prioritize environmentally cleaner alternatives to car-based transportation such as rail, improved bus services, and active transportation (biking and walking). Reliable public transit is the cornerstone of independence for so many people. Restoring rail services to Vancouver Island would be beneficial for so many people, including commuters, tourists and people who need to travel for shopping, medical appointments and other reasons. It would also efficiently move goods up and down the island and allow for alternate travel methods if there are highway closures.

Rob Douglas MAYOR-ELECT

“

I support the restoration of rail service on Vancouver Island, including passenger service between Victoria and the Cowichan region and freight operations across the Island. Restoring rail would improve regional connectivity, provide additional transportation options, and support economic development across Vancouver Island.

I have been clear about my support for rail restoration in my roles as Mayor of North Cowichan and Director with the Cowichan Valley Regional District. I maintain a strong and constructive relationship with the Island Corridor Foundation and am committed to working collaboratively with regional, provincial and federal governments and First Nations partners to advance the restoration of rail service on Vancouver Island.

Christopher Justice COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I absolutely support preserving and restoring Vancouver Island rail as part of a practical, long-term transportation strategy for our region. My track on council and the CVRD board record reflects a consistent focus on long-term planning, protecting taxpayers, and preserving important public assets. I believe the Island Rail Corridor is an important public asset that should be preserved and thoughtfully integrated with transit, land-use, and active transportation planning.

Derek Masselink COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I support the restoration and use of the Vancouver Island Rail Corridor as part of an integrated, inter-regional transportation system that includes transit, rail, alternative and active forms of transportation like biking and walking. In a time of converging crises of affordability, global economic instability, climate change and environmental decline, it makes sense financially, ecologically and socially to restore rail to Vancouver Island. Doing this - and doing it sooner than later - would give us an effective, significant and achievable way to decarbonize. It would stimulate the local economy, enabling our island communities to work and connect to each other more effectively and sustainably. And it would also save us money. With more than 450,000 fossil-fuel burning cars on the Island needing to be replaced with electric ones, the cost for us to do this individually will be collectively much, much higher - about 10 times more - than the cost of building a modern, Island-wide, regional transportation system that includes rail.

We need an efficient, modernized transportation system that includes rail. We needed it yesterday. Let's get it built today.

Valerie Russell COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I am a strong supporter of public transit and would love to see trains running on Vancouver Island again. I believe we should protect the rail corridor and seriously explore how rail could connect our communities and work together with buses and active transportation. We need to think long-term, while making sure that any plan is practical, environmentally responsible and financially sustainable.

Lynn Hansen COUNCILLOR-ELECT



I support preserving the Vancouver Island rail corridor as an important transportation asset and keeping the possibility of future rail service open.

I also believe the conversation needs to go beyond simply getting people from one community to another. A connected transportation system can contribute to economic development, tourism, employment opportunities, and the overall resilience of Vancouver Island communities.

As our Island population continues to grow, we need to think about how we will move increasing numbers of people without relying almost entirely on our existing road network. Providing practical alternatives to private vehicles could help address congestion and reduce pressure on highways and major transportation corridors.

Rail could also potentially provide greater connectivity between communities that function as bedroom communities and larger employment centres. If people can travel efficiently and reliably between where they live and where they work, it may allow communities to grow in a more balanced way while giving residents additional employment choices.

For Ladysmith, there is also an opportunity to consider how improved transportation connections could support tourism. Visitors who can travel between communities more easily may be more likely to explore multiple destinations rather than treating communities as individual stops. A connected Island transportation network could potentially benefit local businesses, tourism operators, accommodations, restaurants, and attractions throughout the region.

I also believe that any discussion about the future of the Island rail corridor needs to be approached with respect for the First Nations governments and communities connected to the corridor. Their knowledge, interests, priorities, rights, and relationships with their territories are an important part of understanding the future of transportation on Vancouver Island.

For me, that means building relationships early, listening carefully, and making sure First Nations governments have meaningful opportunities to be part of the conversation—not simply being brought in after decisions have already been made.

As a municipal candidate, I also believe we need to be realistic about the responsibilities, costs, infrastructure requirements, and partnerships necessary to restore and operate rail service. I would support working with neighbouring municipalities, regional districts, First Nations governments, BC Transit, the provincial and federal governments, and other stakeholders to determine what practical and sustainable opportunities exist.

Jeff Virtanen COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

The rail corridor is pivotal to the Island's economic, environmental, and transportation future. Whether it's providing an alternate route to the Malabar to being a major part of our supply chain infrastructure to helping us achieve our environmental goals, the rail corridor is incredibly important to Vancouver Island.

3

Regional District of Nanaimo

NANAIMO • LANTZVILLE • PARKSVILLE • QUALICUM BEACH

12 elected

■ **Nanaimo**

8 ELECTED

Sheryl Armstrong COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I believe rail is a very important for commercial and personal use. One only has to look at places where a robust rail service is in place to see the advantages. People can work if they choose while commuting to work and on the way home they can relax instead of driving in congested roads. Rail has been used for years to move goods effectively across the country and it could do the same here. It is an efficient alternative to vehicular traffic and can carry many people in a timely manner.

In summary rail is efficient, it can be cost effective if done correctly, eco friendly, and is much more reliable and safer than highway driving. It also gives people another option instead of driving or flying and they can see some beautiful scenery.

Marnie Boers COUNCILLOR-ELECT



I support bringing rail service back to Vancouver Island because it helps people get to work, see family, access healthcare, and stay connected to their communities.

As a nurse, I see how important reliable transportation is, especially for people who don't drive and need to get to healthcare appointments or visit loved ones in the hospital. Bringing rail back would give people another safe and accessible way to travel while taking pressure off our busy roads. We need to look ahead and make sure rail, transit, trails, and roads all work together as our communities grow. Restoring the Island Rail Corridor would give people another way to travel while experiencing the beauty of Vancouver Island.

Andréa Coutu COUNCILLOR-ELECT



The Island Rail Corridor represents something much bigger than rails and trains. It's strategic public access with good financial sense that represents protection of our future needs. The corridor helps provide for future economic resiliency, industrial and port flexibility, job opportunities, affordable housing, connected communities, emergency preparedness and choice in transportation needs. I stand for protecting public infrastructure, working collaboratively with Indigenous and other governments, and making evidence-based decisions that leave our community stronger, more connected, more flexible and better prepared for the future. Working with other regions to strategically protect rail assets and taking a flexible approach to what services and revenues emerge can improve things for people in Nanaimo.

Hilary Eastmure COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I believe rail transit is a key aspect of future sustainable transportation and transit on Vancouver Island. I brought a motion to Nanaimo City Council on October 6, 2025 to support establishing clear transit connections to the Island Corridor, to ensure we're planning for a future that includes rail service as a central aspect of our transportation and transit network. My motion passed unanimously, and the large number of supportive emails and comments I received from the public clearly demonstrated widespread support for restoring rail service on Vancouver Island.

Ben Geselbracht COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

The Island Rail Corridor is a valuable community asset with the potential to improve transportation, strengthen connections between communities, and support long-term economic prosperity. Realizing that potential will require collaboration among First Nations, local governments, and other stakeholders to address historical injustices and plan for the corridor's highest and best use for future generations.

Erin Hemmens COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I'm a second term councillor who helped bring interregional bus service to our area, and I support increasing our resiliency through the restoration of the rail corridor with Indigenous partners.



I am a long-time supporter of rail and have used my positions as a Nanaimo City Councillor, Regional District of Nanaimo Director and former Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Ladysmith to promote the revitalization of rail on Vancouver Island. First Nations must be a key partner in this revitalization effort because the existing E&N rail line travels through their traditional territories and bisects many of their communities.

The E&N rail corridor is already twinned with a trail system in Nanaimo and the corridor should be a key part of the future of rapid transit in Nanaimo. I have supported the implementation of the rail corridor into our official community plan to ensure that zoning decisions, density, transit exchange placement, and land use decisions consider the potential for light rapid transit and freight traffic.

I remember taking the dayliner from Ladysmith to Victoria when I was a child. As the island population grows, I believe the E&N railway should play a major role in the future of transportation of passengers connecting communities again. This is especially important in areas where there are no alternative routes to the existing highways in the south and mid-island (the Malahat, Oyster Bay, Nanoose Bay and Cameron Lake).

Rail is important for moving freight and relieving congestion by lowering truck traffic on our highways. Revitalized rail is also a key part of the future economic growth in our region. As the Port of Nanaimo expands, the case for a rail spur to Duke Point to connect freight to and from communities on the island will become more convincing.

Ian Thorpe COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Regarding restoration of rail service to Vancouver Island, I can confidently answer YES to the six questions in your questionnaire. During my past 12 years as a Nanaimo City Councillor, I have consistently and repeatedly spoken in favour of restoring rail service. The Island Corridor is a huge opportunity to advance transportation on the Island, and rail should be the top priority. Integration with transit and trail could hopefully be achieved, but rail is what is needed for improved movement of both people and goods. It is a crucial component of our supply chain. As our region's population has grown, our highways have become more and more congested with vehicles. Rail service would provide a fast and convenient alternative, as it does in many parts of Europe. I have been frankly disappointed with the lack of support for restoration of rail on the Island from the federal government. And even more disappointed by the lack of leadership or interest from the provincial government. The Island Corridor is an amazing transportation opportunity, and I hope that the possibility of restoring rail service will not be lost.

■ **Lantzville**

1 ELECTED

Jonathan Lerner COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Affordable rail transportation connecting Vancouver Island communities would provide strong economic benefits, while also offering a safe and efficient method for those without vehicles to access specialized medical services. Regional transportation can play a critical part in providing access to the limited medical resources available on Vancouver Island, especially for youth and seniors in remote communities. I look forward to working with all levels of government, including First Nations partners, to explore and prioritize reliable transportation. I believe municipalities can provide safe, well-maintained roads for personal vehicles, while also working in partnership to offer expanded public transportation options for those who rely on these services.

Sean Wood COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

The Vancouver Island Rail Corridor is a public asset that predates most of the communities it runs through, and it will still be here long after any of us in current office. Removing it would trigger remediation costs of hundreds of millions of dollars that would land on Island taxpayers, and would foreclose transportation options for generations of Vancouver Islanders who deserve better than a car-only future.

I fully support Island Corridor Foundation CEO Thomas Bevan and the approach he is taking: rather than a single monolithic vision imposed from above, working community by community to identify which functions of the corridor best serve each Island municipality — passenger service in some corridors, freight in others, tourism operations, active-transportation integration through trails, or combinations thereof. Parksville's needs are not Cowichan Valley's needs, and they are not the North Island's needs. A phased, community-informed approach is how this asset gets preserved and eventually restored to full function without pretending every community wants the same thing on the same timeline.

Rail, bus, and trail networks working together move more people using less space and energy than a car-dominated system ever could. As mayor of Parksville, I would bring the same posture I bring as chair of the Regional District of Nanaimo's Oceanside Services Committee: regional coordination, land-use integration through the Official Community Plan review, and honest attention to how our part of the corridor fits Island-wide transportation planning.

Adam Walker MAYOR-ELECT

“

I'm committed to protecting Vancouver Island's railway corridor for future generations. My priorities are restoring financially viable rail services, expanding trails alongside the rail bed, and planning our communities around future rail connections. Working with regional partners, I'll advocate for provincial and federal funding to get practical projects moving, starting where the case is strongest.

Mischa Oak COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

The Island Rail Corridor is an irreplaceable asset. Once a continuous corridor is broken, it's nearly impossible to put back together. As a councillor, I would make sure Qualicum Beach protects the corridor, plans around our station, and joins neighbouring communities in pressing the provincial and federal governments for a real restoration plan and the funding to deliver it. In the meantime, I'd like to see a trail built alongside the tracks, starting with local First Nations and then additional communities as partners, so the corridor improves our quality of life today while staying ready for trains.

■ Area A • Baynes Sound / Denman & Hornby Islands

1 ELECTED

Daniel Arbour AREA DIRECTOR • ACCLAIMED

“

The Island Corridor (E&N Railway) is an amazing asset on Vancouver Island. We should all be grateful for the foresight of First Nation leaders and Regional Districts 20 years ago to take ownership of the corridor before it fell into abandonment. Since then, limited rail operations have continued, and I hope we will see increased rail use on the south Island. At the same time, more than 100 km of pedestrian and cycling trails have been built along the corridor, and regional land-use planning is increasingly recognizing the corridor's long-term potential.

In the Comox Valley, with few signals of near-term large investments by the Provincial or Federal governments to return rail service to our segment of the corridor, I believe we need to be pragmatic and focus on growing the benefits it can provide to residents today.

In Union Bay, we recently completed a small piece of trail work that improves connectivity between "downtown" and the senior housing complex. In Royston, this fall and winter we will put shovels in the ground to create a safe cycling and walking route along the corridor to Royston School. There is also a new collaboration, "Rotary to Royston," to connect Royston and Courtenay by trail. I am very excited about this initiative and intend to work on it. If completed, it would create close to 5 km of new trail linking the two communities.

I am heartened to see the corridor increasingly being put to use. While efforts to restore and expand rail service may find more fertile ground further south in the coming years, there is still a great deal we can do here in the Comox Valley to make the corridor increasingly valuable to our communities.

That means working in partnership with K'omoks First Nation and the Island Corridor Foundation, making practical investments where we can, and continuing to build on the tremendous potential of this shared asset.

Sean Sullivan COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I am a longtime supporter of the railway returning to Vancouver Island. We need to build for the future and bring our communities together through alternative transportation! The railway will provide a world class opportunity for commerce and tourism that would bring interconnectivity and prosperity to the entire island.

Troy Therrien COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I would love to see passenger service restored on the E&N. Realistically, at this time, this is probably only possible on Southern Vancouver Island. North of Nanaimo, there just isn't the population density to make it economically feasible right now.

Until such time as we see passenger services resumed, and even after, I think the right of way can also be used as an active transportation corridor allowing walking and cycling trails to connect communities along the tracks.

Kelly Matthews COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I am strongly in support of and excited about the future vision of an Island Rail and Trail from Victoria to Courtenay.

Island Rail presents an important transportation-planning opportunity for Vancouver Island. The existing corridor is a significant infrastructure asset, and current Comox Valley planning recognizes potential roles for passenger rail, freight, active transportation, ecological restoration, and community development.

Preserving the corridor maintains future transportation options while allowing communities to explore rails AND trails, rather than treating them as mutually exclusive.

Any future vision must also be developed with First Nations as essential partners. The CVRD identifies reconciliation, K'ómoks First Nation leadership, rights, governance, and participation in decision-making as foundational principles for planning the corridor's future.

Preserving the railbed, planning for rails and trails, and working collaboratively with First Nations can keep future options open while supporting transportation, recreation, environmental and community objectives.

Lisa Bourgeois COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I see real potential for rail to connect our communities, reduce emissions and open up new economic opportunities across the Island. At the same time, I recognize that the corridor has a complicated history, particularly for First Nations, and that any path forward needs to respect their rights and priorities.

For me, this is about looking at the bigger picture, being open to creative solutions and working together to understand what's possible. It's an opportunity that deserves thoughtful consideration, with a clear understanding of the costs, benefits and long-term implications.

Thanks again for reaching out and for keeping this important conversation going.

Jonathan Kerr COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

Restoring rail service to the island would be a powerful economic driver for our region and a more environmentally friendly way to transport people and goods. With a positive business case, restoring island rail would remove many cars and trucks from the highways, improve safety, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Island Rail Corridor is a critical infrastructure asset, and combining a restored rail service, a bus system, and a trail network, our region could be a National example of transportation integration. For me, it's not a binary question of rail or trails, it can (and should) be both!

I also respect the process of reconciliation with local First Nations, and they are an important voice at the table with respect to the future of the Island Rail Corridor.

Jessica Wegg COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

As a candidate who is prioritizing infrastructure for youth and climate resiliency and environmental stewardship, having adequate, reliable rail service on the Island is absolutely something that I support. What a boon to our community, communities up and down the Island, and the Island at large this would be!

5

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

PORT ALBERNI • UCLUELET

3 elected

■ Port Alberni

2 ELECTED

Charles Mealey MAYOR-ELECT

“

As a person that has supported and helped get the Alberni Pacific Railway back up and running here, I'd love to support Island Rail fully



I believe Vancouver Island rail needs to remain part of our long-term transportation planning. I previously served on the Island Rail Corridor Committee, so this is an issue I have followed for many years.

Vancouver Island continues to grow, and as we move toward a population of more than one million people, we need to think well beyond today's transportation needs. More people means more vehicles, more goods being transported, greater pressure on our highways and increased demand for housing and infrastructure. Provincial transportation work has also recognized that population growth will increase both passenger traffic and truck traffic on Island highways.

Rail could be part of the solution. Passenger and freight rail could provide another transportation option and potentially reduce some of the pressure on our highway system. For the Alberni Valley, it could also provide something particularly important another transportation corridor when Highway 4 is affected by a wildfire, accident or other emergency. We have already experienced what happens when our main highway connection is closed. In fact, the ACRD brought forward an Island Rail Corridor resolution specifically because of the need for alternative movement of people, goods and potentially emergency equipment during highway closures.

At the same time, we have to be realistic about the challenges. The Wesley Ridge wildfire damaged several trestles along Cameron Lake, making the restoration of passenger and freight service beyond Cameron Lake very challenging in the near term. Our 2026 Alberni Valley Rail Corridor Study recognized that reality while still concluding that opportunities for the corridor should continue to be pursued.

So for me, this isn't about promising that trains will be running again tomorrow. It's about protecting the corridor and not closing the door on what we may need in the future. We should look at passenger rail, freight, tourism, connections with BC Transit and emergency transportation as part of an Island-wide system and determine what is practical and financially achievable.

We have to plan not just for today, but for 10, 20 and 30 years from now. Once an important transportation corridor is lost, getting it back can be extremely difficult. With Vancouver Island continuing to grow, I believe preserving our options and planning ahead makes sense.

Alishia Fox COUNCILLOR-ELECT

“

I strongly support the restoration of passenger rail on Vancouver Island and the preservation of the existing rail corridor.

Living on the west coast, I see firsthand the challenges Island communities face when people don't have access to a vehicle or when our limited transportation routes are disrupted. Better regional transportation would help people access health care, employment, appointments and neighbouring communities, while giving residents and visitors an alternative to driving, reducing pressure on our highways and helping reduce transportation emissions.

The 2023 Cameron Bluffs wildfire made the need for transportation resilience particularly clear for those of us in the Alberni Valley and on the west coast. When Highway 4, our main paved route connecting us to the rest of the Island, was closed, the alternative was a lengthy gravel detour over forest-service and private industrial roads through Bamfield and Lake Cowichan. I drove that route myself. What would normally be a straightforward trip across the Island became hours of difficult travel on rough, unpaved roads. It demonstrated just how vulnerable our communities are when our primary transportation corridor is cut off.

For that reason, I think it is counterintuitive to lose an existing transportation corridor rather than seriously explore investing in its restoration. Rail has the potential to connect communities, provide another transportation option, reduce vehicle traffic and emissions and add resilience to Vancouver Island's transportation network.

I recognize that extending rail all the way to Ucluelet and Tofino would come with significant geographic and financial challenges, but as someone living in a community that depends on one main paved road in and out, I would love to see a future where the west coast is eventually connected to a broader Island transportation network as well.

As a Ucluelet councillor, I would support the restoration of Island rail and the preservation of the corridor. The details of how that happens require collaboration among First Nations and regional, provincial and federal partners, but the overall direction is one I support.

Campbell River

1 ELECTED

Joëlle Samson COUNCILLOR-ELECT

"

Although historically Campbell River has not been connected to the Island Rail Corridor, I am in favour of having discussions with local First Nations and the Strathcona Regional District to find solutions to potentially connect to the Island Rail Corridor with the goal of providing accessible transportation from Campbell River all the way to Victoria. There are many services that Campbell Riverites are required to travel down island to access, with very limited options for travel. Having a robust public transportation system that connects local buses and trails to railway stations in our City would be a game changer for accessibility to services down island and for the tourism industry in Campbell River.

Area D • Oyster Bay / Buttle Lake

1 ELECTED

John Rice AREA DIRECTOR-ELECT

"

The Strathcona Regional District has a large geographical footprint where reliable transportation services do not exist. While Area D has made significant investments in public Transit infrastructure, I recognize public transit is only one piece to creating a robust transportation system. Reliable rail services could certainly enhance travel on Vancouver Island and fill the gaps between current Public Transit.

What every candidate was asked

- 01 Whether they would prioritize restoring passenger rail service
- 02 Whether they'd coordinate zoning and land-use with transit-oriented development along the corridor
- 03 How rail fits into an integrated regional transportation network
- 04 Whether they'd consider the corridor from an island-wide planning perspective, not just their own municipality
- 05 Their support for phased, incremental restoration of service
- 06 Their view of the financial and legal risks of allowing the corridor to be removed permanently

Methodology. Statements are reproduced from candidate responses to the Restore Island Rail Society's 2026 candidate questionnaire, published at restoreislandrail.com/election-2026. Election outcomes were matched against preliminary results compiled on October 19, 2026.

Every result in. All 121 questionnaire respondents now have a result. The 56 elected are listed here; the full roster, including those not elected, is kept by the Society.

RESTORE ISLAND RAIL SOCIETY

A grassroots campaign to restore passenger rail service along Vancouver Island's historic E&N corridor, from Victoria to Courtenay.

CONTACT

info@restoreislandrail.com

restoreislandrail.com/election-2026

FOLLOW THE CAMPAIGN

[Facebook](#) · [Instagram](#) · [LinkedIn](#) · [X](#) · [YouTube](#)

2026 RESULTS EDITION — ELECTED OFFICIALS' STATEMENTS FROM CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES AS PUBLISHED AT [RESTOREISLANDRAIL.COM](https://restoreislandrail.com)