

Questions for Candidates in the 2026 General Election

Would you make Vancouver Island rail a priority?

Why it matters: Prioritizing restoration of the Island Rail Corridor signals whether a candidate is thinking long-term about transportation, safety, and economic resilience. Rail can move large numbers of people and goods efficiently, reduce pressure on highways, and put critical travel in the hands of trained professionals rather than relying entirely on private vehicles.

Do you understand how zoning decisions, transit exchange placement, and other infrastructure decisions can support and strengthen the case for rail?

Why it matters: Land use and transportation are inseparable. Strategic zoning, such as allowing higher density, mixed-use development near stations, and well-placed transit exchanges that connect buses directly to rail can dramatically increase ridership and financial viability. Coordinating municipal planning with assets like the Island Rail Corridor and services from BC Transit ensures the railway isn't isolated but instead becomes the backbone of a connected regional system. Candidates who understand this can turn policy tools into tangible, long-term transportation success.

Do you understand how integrating rail, bus, and trail networks can create a more efficient transportation system than a purely car-centric design?

Why it matters:

An integrated system, where rail provides high-capacity backbone service, buses handle flexible local connections, and trails support active transportation, moves more people using less space and energy than a system dominated by private vehicles. Leveraging assets like the Island Rail Corridor alongside regional transit providers such as BC Transit and connected trail networks can reduce congestion, improve accessibility, and offer real alternatives to driving. Candidates who grasp this are more likely to support coordinated planning rather than fragmented, inefficient investments.

Would you approach transportation planning from an island-wide perspective that considers neighboring municipalities and regional districts?

Why it matters:

On an island, transportation systems are inherently interconnected. Decisions in one community affect mobility across the entire region. Coordinated planning between municipalities and regional districts, especially along shared assets like the Island Rail Corridor, is essential to avoid fragmented investments and missed opportunities. Candidates who think beyond local boundaries are better positioned to support seamless travel, align infrastructure priorities, and advocate effectively to provincial and federal partners for funding and delivery.

Do you support the idea of running different rail services on different sections of the corridor

Why it matters:

A corridor doesn't have to be "all or nothing." Phased implementation, such as passenger service in higher-demand areas, freight or tourism operations in others, or even time-separated use can build momentum, prove demand, and generate revenue sooner. Using the Island Rail Corridor in a flexible, staged way reduces upfront risk while still preserving the full long-term vision. Candidates who understand this are less likely to dismiss rail as too expensive or impractical and more likely to support pragmatic, incremental progress.

Do you understand the long-term financial and legal risks of removing the rail infrastructure, including potential remediation costs?

Why it matters:

Removing the tracks from the Island Rail Corridor would trigger an environmental study with remediation requirements, especially where soils may be contaminated from historic rail use. The 2025 Decommissioning and Remediation report by Stantec estimated anywhere between \$1 and \$2.6 million per km. That means between \$289 and \$751 million for the whole corridor. Those costs would be downloaded onto Vancouver Island taxpayers via the Island Corridor Foundation membership. Candidates who understand these risks are better equipped to make fiscally responsible decisions and avoid irreversible actions that could limit future transportation options.

NOTE: If you send your answers to info@restoreislandrail.com, we'll list you as a supporter on the [Restore Island Rail 2026 Election page](#) that will be shared with our over 40,000 petition signers and on social media. **If you would like to make a personal statement to accompany your support, please include that in the text of your email.**