



## Governance and Priorities Committee Report

For the Meeting of October 9, 2014

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**To:** Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** October 3, 2014  
**From:** Dwayne Kalynchuk, Director, Engineering and Public Works  
**Subject:** E & N Rail – Interim and Long-Term Station Options/Budget

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### Executive Summary

At its April 24, 2014 meeting, Council passed the following motion:

"That staff report back on the interim and long-term options for the preferred terminus for the E & N Railroad station, including pedestrian access to Downtown Victoria, and that the report include information on the budget for the replacement railroad station."

Support for rail service, and the location of rail terminals/stations, is noted in the Official Community Plan. Locating a rail station closer to Downtown strengthens the connection to the business centre, and better serves commuter and tourist-related passengers. A planned date for rail service commencing has not yet been announced. Should ICF provide a date when rail service would re-commence, consultation with various stakeholders (BC Transit, neighbourhood associations, ICF, and developers) would be recommended to ensure a station is provided in the appropriate location.

Staff identified three locations appropriate for a train station. All three locations discussed in this report have convenient connections to a primary transit corridor on Esquimalt Road, and are within a reasonable walking distance to the Downtown Core. The City currently has \$203,500 allocated for the installation of a temporary station.

This budget was prepared several years ago based on utilizing an existing City owned construction trailer renovated and located on a temporary site. The locations noted in the report have not been costed to determine if the budget is adequate. However it should be noted there is no contractual commitment for the City of Victoria to provide a rail station.

### Recommendation:

That this report be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Dellebuur'.

Brad Dellebuur, Acting Assistant Director  
Transportation and Parking Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dwayne Kalynchuk'.

Dwayne Kalynchuk, P. Eng.  
Director of Engineering and Public Works

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date: October 3, 2014

## **Purpose**

*At its April 24, 2014 meeting, Council requested staff report back on the interim and long-term options for the preferred terminus for the E & N Railroad station, including pedestrian access to downtown Victoria, and that the report include information on the budget for the replacement railroad station.*

## **Background**

The E & N corridor is comprised of a north/south corridor between Victoria and Courtney, and two east/west corridors (Parksville/Port Alberni, and Duncan/Lake Cowichan). In the City of Victoria, the rail corridor runs east/west through the Victoria West neighbourhood, terminating at Catherine Street. A legal lot for transportation purposes extends the corridor through the Roundhouse development site to Saghalie Road, and a City-owned lot further extends the corridor from Saghalie Road to the west side of the Esquimalt Road/Harbour Road intersection. Following completion of the Johnson Street Bridge project, a corridor for rail will be preserved across the Victoria Harbour to the west side of Wharf Street.

Rail service on Vancouver Island was suspended in April 2011, after it was determined rail operations were not safe for passenger service. Pending the completion of a Train Service Agreement between the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF), Southern Vancouver Island Railways (SVI), and VIA Rail, SVI and ICF will take steps to return the tracks to a safe condition, in anticipation of rail service re-commencing. A planned date for rail service commencing has not yet been announced.

Subject to repairs noted by ICF and SVI, rail service could extend into the City of Victoria as far east as the west side of the Esquimalt Road/Harbour Road intersection, where the tracks currently terminate. A timeline for this work has not been provided to the City.

Should ICF provide a date when rail service would re-commence, consultation with various stakeholders (BC Transit, neighbourhood associations, ICF, and developers) would be recommended to ensure a station is provided in the appropriate location.

Running rail service on the E & N Rail corridor will require that a station be provided in Victoria. The former VIA rail station building at the Pandora Avenue/Wharf Street intersection was removed in 2012 to accommodate road realignment for the new Johnson Street Bridge, and tracks/ties were removed to the west side of the Esquimalt Road/Harbour Road intersection.

## **Issues & Analysis**

Support for rail service, and the location of rail terminals/stations, is noted in the Official Community Plan. One of the Broad Objectives in the Transportation and Mobility recommends that "new and upgraded intercity bus and inter-regional rail terminals are located in close proximity to rapid and frequent transit stations in the Downtown Core Area". Section 7.25.6 also recommends "partnering with others to maintain and enhance passenger rail service on the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Rail Corridor including commuter rail service as market and funding conditions permit".

Generally, locating a rail station closer to Downtown strengthens the connection to the business centre, and better serves commuter and tourist-related passengers. While the locations are noted for an interim station, all locations identified could function as a permanent location.

## **Budget**

The City currently has \$203,500 allocated in the Johnson Street Bridge project budget for the installation of a temporary rail station.

This budget, developed in 2010, is based on utilizing an existing City-owned construction trailer renovated and located on a temporary site. The locations noted in the report have not been costed to determine if the budget is adequate. However it should be noted there is no contractual commitment for the City of Victoria to provide a rail station.

### Options & Impacts

Several locations (see map) could be considered appropriate interim or long-term rail station options:

1. **Mary Street:** ICF owns several smaller (18m x 36m) lots south of Esquimalt Road, between Mary Street and Catherine Street. The existing rail tracks bisect the properties. An interim station could be provided between the tracks and Esquimalt Road, with passenger pick up/drop off possible on the portion of the properties south of the tracks. Existing connections to downtown transit service are on Esquimalt Road, within 125m of the site. Walking time from this location to the Johnson/Wharf intersection downtown would be approximately 20-25 minutes.

Current zoning for the property (M-1) does not permit train station use. Rezoning, and a Development Permit, would be required to site a train station at this location.

2. **Roundhouse Site:** The property bounded by Esquimalt Road, Sitkum Road, Saghalie Road, Kimta Road, and Catherine Street is referred to as the Roundhouse site, currently owned by Focus Equities. An interim station could be provided on this property, with passenger pick up/drop off possibly being provided on-site. Preliminary discussions with the owner determined that, if a station was being contemplated on the site, locating a station in the northwest corner of the property was preferred by the site owner. Passenger pick-up/drop-off could be accommodated on-site, or across Catherine Street on ICF properties, as per the Mary Street option. Existing connections to downtown transit service are on Esquimalt Road, within 60m of the site. Walking time from this location to the Johnson/Wharf intersection downtown would be approximately 15-20 minutes.

The owner has indicated this location within their site would be preferable, as it has minimal impact on the overall development parcels. However, preliminary drawings have indicated a significant impact on the "the knoll", a rock outcrop located at the corner of Esquimalt Road and Catherine Street. The *Roundhouse Design Guidelines* state the knoll is to be preserved as a natural feature and amenity. As a result, amendments to the *Official Community Plan* related to these Design Guidelines and Master Development Agreement would be required to facilitate the construction of a rail station in this location.

Railway operations are a permitted use in Development Area 1 of the Roundhouse site (all of the property north of the existing rail line). While the current zoning permits train station use, a Development Permit would be required for any new structure added to the site, and interior improvements for use of any existing building on-site would require permits. Securing an interim train station site within the property would require agreements between the City, ICF, and the developer, and would likely involve on-going lease/rental costs.

3. **Johnson Street Bridge West Green Space (S-Curve):** As the Esquimalt Road approach to the new Johnson Street Bridge is completed, the road through the existing S-Curve lands will be decommissioned, and the area will be set aside for future waterfront green space. This property is currently public right-of-way. An interim station could be provided in this area, with passenger pick up/drop off possibly being provided south of the tracks, accessed via the new southerly extension of Harbour Road. Existing connections to transit service to downtown transit service would be at the Esquimalt Road/Harbour Road intersection, within 60m of the site. Walking time from this location to the Johnson/Wharf intersection downtown would be

approximately 5-7 minutes.

A proposal to locate an interim station at this location would have to be considered during a larger planning discussion/design exercise on the development of this future green space, currently planned for next year. The train could stop at the west side of the Esquimalt Road/Harbour Road intersection, where the tracks currently terminate, or the tracks and rail bed could be extended east towards the Victoria Harbour, should the design exercise findings conclude that was most appropriate for the overall development of the space. A Development Permit would be required for any structure located at this site.

### **Conclusions**

Rail service on Vancouver Island was suspended in April 2011 after it was determined rail operations were not safe for passenger service. Pending the completion of a Train Service Agreement between the Island Corridor Foundation, Southern Vancouver Island Railways, and VIA Rail, ICF and SVI will take steps to return the tracks to a safe condition prior to re-commencing rail service.

Running rail service on the E & N Rail corridor will require that a station be provided in Victoria. While the Official Community Plan recommends locating this type of facility in close proximity to transit stations in the Downtown Core Area, the locations discussed in this report all have convenient connections to a primary transit corridor on Esquimalt Road, and are within a reasonable walking distance to the Downtown Core. Should ICF provide a date when rail service would re-commence, consultation with various stakeholders (BC Transit, neighbourhood associations, ICF, and developers) would be recommended to ensure a station is provided in the appropriate location.

Locating a rail station closer to Downtown strengthens the connection to the business centre, and better serves commuter and tourist-related passengers.

### **Recommendations**

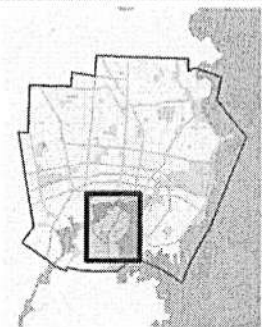
That Council receives this report for information.



10/03/2014



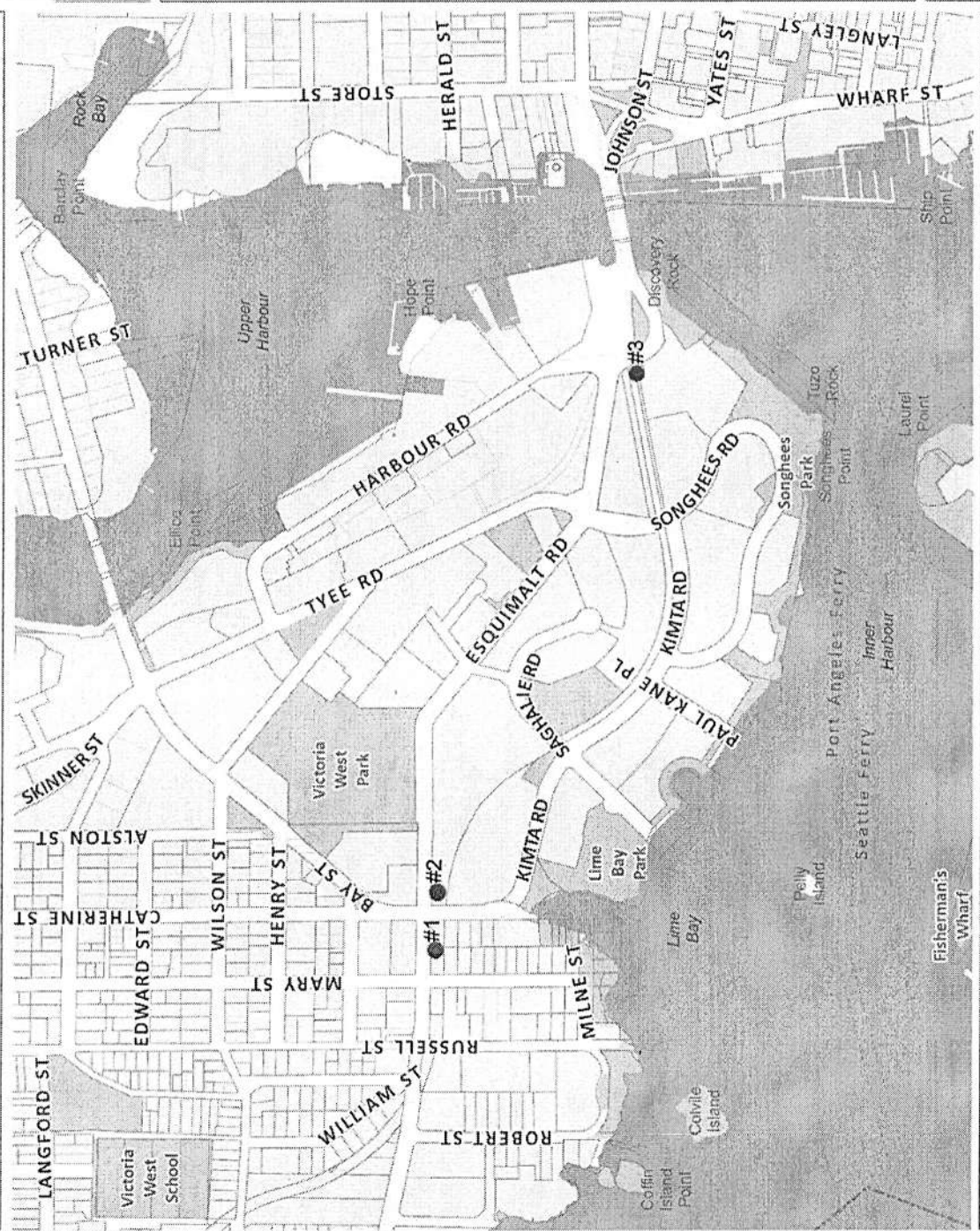
# E&N Rail - Station Options



**Legend**  
Victoria Parcels

1: 7,772

**Notes**



This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.  
**THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION**

394.8 0 197.41 394.8 Meters

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