

# Editorial: The mayors unite on commuter rail for E&N



The Regional District of Nanaimo has voted unanimously to withdraw funding from the Island Rail Foundation.  
Photograph By Bruce Stotesbury, Times Colonist

All 13 Greater Victoria mayors have agreed to ask the province to get train wheels in motion on the E&N line between Langford and Victoria.

Once residents get over the shock of reading “All 13 Greater Victoria mayors have agreed,” they can begin to ponder yet again the wisdom and utility of

taking another run at the question of commuter rail.

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The mayors are hopeful that their unanimity will persuade the provincial government they really are serious about solving the congestion problem on the lower Island. And they hope that seriousness will move Premier John Horgan, whose constituents would benefit, to take action.

They want the government to take control of the line from the non-profit Island Corridor Foundation and negotiate agreements with First Nations as a key step to clearing the route for use.

The line has been studied repeatedly, and it's clear that restoring the roadbed and tracks to a usable condition comes with a big price tag. Is it worth it? That is very much in the eye of the beholder.

The choke point that the McKenzie interchange is supposed to ease is the current measure of congestion. Rail commuters could zip past that area, but not all the drivers steaming in the Colwood Crawl are going downtown. Many peel off at McKenzie to go to the university or out to the Peninsula.

Does that leave enough to justify a train?

The region is already committed to rapid bus lanes. Making those work would be a faster and cheaper way to move people around.

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