

# A Year of Renewal and Vision



# ANNUAL REPORT



**ISLAND  
CORRIDOR**  
FOUNDATION

**Date: May 25**

2024 marked a year of renewal for the Island Corridor Foundation. With new leadership and a growing focus on collaboration, ICF advanced maintenance projects, deepened relationships, and continued the Shared Vision work—reaffirming our commitment to a corridor that reflects and serves all Vancouver Islanders.

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# 2024 Year-End **REPORT**

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## Message from the **Co Chairs**

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2024 was a year of renewal for the Island Corridor Foundation with board co-chair Daniel Arbour leaving for new commitments and the election of Barbara Desjardins to this position. In July, The ICF board said goodbye to CEO Larry Stevenson and welcomed Thomas Bevan as Chief Executive Officer. Larry served the ICF with passion and dedication for 6 years, and we wish him well on his next adventure. Thomas brings a fresh perspective to the corridor. He is a seasoned urban planner, with over a decade of experience in real estate

development, including leading successful projects that prioritize affordability, walkability, and transit-oriented development. Significant work has been done and continues this year around a shared vision for the corridor with critical work on understanding First Nation needs and land reversion.

# CEO COMMENTS

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It has been an incredible first six months with the ICF. I am so grateful for the opportunity and trust placed in me to lead this unique organization in such a complex and important time. Thank you to all our members and the Vancouver Island community for the warm welcome. Calling the hub city of Nanaimo our new home, I've greatly enjoyed the chance to explore the beautiful communities along the corridor, getting to know the people and leaders who make this Island so special. Our staff team at the ICF and the partners we regularly work with inspire me every day with their commitment to the Island and finding ways for the corridor to thrive. I hope in 2025 we can demonstrate tangible progress on the corridor's future uses and begin to take real actions on achievable projects that we've heard are most important.

Thomas Bevan  
CEO

# Property Management Highlights

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IN 2024 we were excited and grateful to receive our first grant funding from BC's Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) to support corridor maintenance. The \$600,000 grant allowed us to complete vegetation clearing, track maintenance and patrols on approximately 170 miles of track on the Victoria subdivision between Esquimalt and Courtenay.

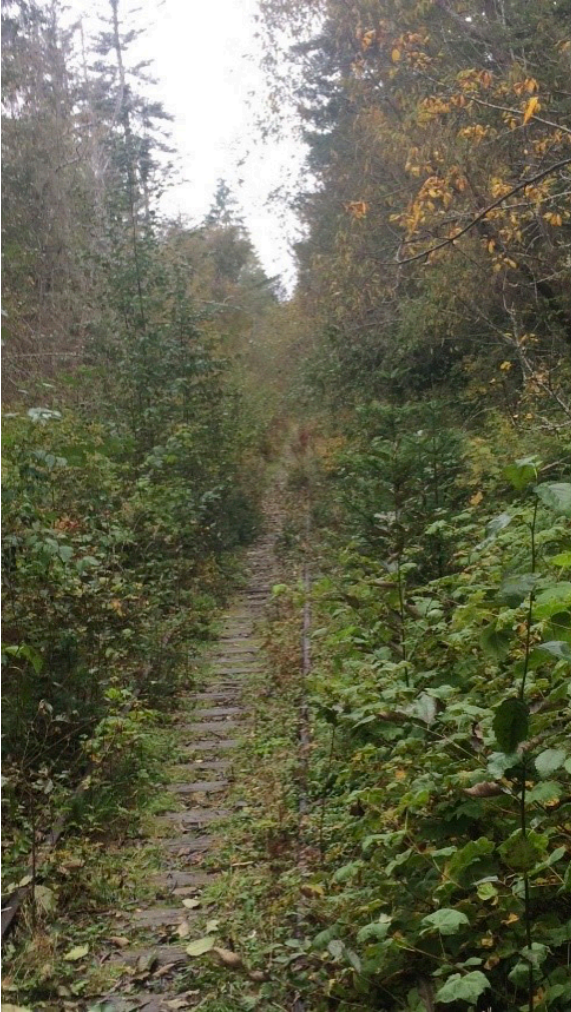
We were delighted to help the Alberni Pacific Heritage Railway (APR), who were back in operation in 2024 after a brief hiatus. Through a partnership with the APR, the Port of Alberni and Southern Railway of Vancouver Island we helped to complete track repairs along the Harbour. This project increased the section of active rail in the City of Port Alberni by 0.7km. In December 2024, the Port Alberni Christmas Steam Train returned after a major boiler repair replacement project. APR enjoyed a sold-out season of festive trips for the public on the new route.

Our staff continued to respond to concerns and addressed dozens of property management issues such as illegal parking, vandalism, garbage and accidents. Unfortunately, given the current lack of affordable housing and supports in BC, encampments are an ongoing issue. There was a major fire on the corridor near an encampment in the Cowichan River area this summer. We thank first responders for their immediate action.

This past year we signed an agency agreement with the City of Langford to collaborate on management of encampments along the corridor in their area. We thank our partners in Langford for the collaborative and sensitive approach to helping care for the corridor. We hope this is the first of what will become more agreements with municipalities to share jurisdiction and help with encampment mitigation and bylaw enforcement.



Victoria Subdivision – 2024 vegetation clearing in Nanaimo



In the University District stretch of North Cowichan, we partnered with the municipality to remove hazard trees and complete landscaping on the corridor near James Street. We are hoping that North Cowichan can continue activating these lands for the community to enjoy and look to the City of Duncan for inspiration! Summertime afternoons in Duncan were wonderfully activated during most lunch hours with music and performances at the station trackside park. The Duncan station also completed significant repairs to the exterior rainscreen. Thank you to the community for contributing to the buy-a-bundle campaign that raised funds for this project.



Photo credit: CVRD/Bones Creative

We inspected and completed repairs to multiple culverts and undertook several ditching projects to improve drainage in locations along the corridor. At Hollywood Road in the Town of Qualicum Beach we partnered with the municipality to improve drainage for neighboring properties.



Hollywood road drainage and ditching improvements

# Larger maintenance projects were completed in specific areas

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## Damage to Dumont bridge

Following a collision from a vehicle, we had the bridge immediately repaired and replaced structural steel pilings in order to restore rail activity in the Nanaimo area.



## Water Main Project

Deep Bay Improvement District – created potential for a future RDN trail.



## CRD Craigflower Pumpstation

Improving water works to access pumpstation on a neighbouring property.

In 2024 we worked to increase public access to the Corridor while we await the longer-term results of the Shared Vision process: Examples include:

- The Shawnigan trail was opened
- The Port Alberni Quay to Quay trail opened
- Top Bridge Regional Park Trail was re-routed to Resort Drive via ICF lands in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). Rerouting this trail onto ICF property allowed RDN to connect pedestrians to Resort Drive and the rest of Parksville.
- We have been talking to local government partners to resolve indemnification issues so that we can increase public use of the Corridor.



There were many mixed-use and multifamily developments under construction adjacent to the corridor this year. It is exciting to see the communities of Vancouver Island encouraging a diversity of infill developments in amenity rich neighbourhoods that are walkable and livable. We hope the corridor can be an amenity that serves current and new residents who live near to the corridor.

We partnered with the Town of Qualicum Beach on their Electric Vehicle charging program. BC Hydro's first project at the Qualicum station is complete and is now ready for use.



Electric vehicle charging at Station



Photo credit: CVRD/Bones Creative

# Shared Vision project highlights:

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Vancouver Island Conference Centre

“Only by addressing historic wrongs can we achieve a truly shared vision. Our future must be better than our past.”  
— Island Corridor Foundation



Photo credit: CVRD/Bones Creative

The Shared Vision project was launched in 2023 with \$18m in funding from Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT). The 14 First Nations and 5 Regional Districts who are involved in the Island Corridor were asked to develop a shared vision for the future of the Corridor.

As part of the Shared Vision Project, several ICF members (First Nations and Regional Districts) have hired consultants to help them establish their own priorities and interests in the Corridor. In 2025, when most consultant reports are due, we will bring the parties together for an all parties meeting to talk about shared interests and the way forward together.

ICF recognizes that acknowledging and resolving First Nations issues with the history and use of the Corridor is the critical first step in any future vision. We were honoured to be asked to provide administrative support to the first and second All Nations Dialogues that took place in Nanaimo in 2024. These important gatherings occurred with the leadership of K'ómoks First Nation and were facilitated by First Nations Management Consultants. Participants at these meetings engaged in confidential discussions about their interests and discussed priorities for joint action.

ICF remains committed to our AGM resolution of October 2023, to support “the return of ICF land to First Nations, where reversionary rights exist.”

We had the opportunity to participate in two major public engagement events on the Shared Vision in 2024, organized by Regional Districts.

- The Alberni-Clayoquot RD public engagement at the Alberni Fall Fair Sept 5-8th (250 participants, 338 survey respondents).
- The Cowichan Valley RD public engagement in Duncan on Sept 14th (450 participants, about 4000 survey respondents).

These were wonderful opportunities to experience first-hand the way the public is connected to the Corridor, how much it means to everyone, and to hear ideas about its future. Results of these engagements will be made public in final reports expected to be provided by the Regional Districts in the first quarter of 2025.

In November 2024, ICF led a study tour for our member representatives to look at examples of Transit Oriented Development in Vancouver, particularly those projects led by First Nations. It was inspiring to see the leadership of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations in transformational development projects in the Lower Mainland.

The future vision for the Corridor is still unknown, but we do know that only by addressing historic wrongs will we be able to achieve a shared vision. Our future must be better than our past.



# Regional Activities:

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01

ICF collaborated with Hupacasath and Tseshaht First Nations to develop a funding proposal for maintenance on the Port Alberni Subdivision contributing to a possible future emergency hirail service.

02

Drone and LiDAR imaging were used to assess corridor conditions, revealing both well-preserved areas and urgent maintenance needs.

03

CRD staff initiated dialogue with ICF about incorporating the corridor into future rapid transit planning, including the possibility of LRT.

04

The CVRD created a stunning promotional video of the corridor, highlighting its community importance and potential.

In October 2024, the ACRD Transportation Advisory Committee passed a unanimous resolution seeking funding to test the viability of emergency use of the Port Alberni Subdivision by a 10-ton hirail service. In partnership with Hupacasath & Tseshaht First Nations, ICF has been developing a funding proposal for a maintenance project on the Alberni Sub in order to safeguard the Corridor there for any potential future use. If supported, the project will include clearing the Port Alberni line of vegetation overgrowth, assessing the conditions of trestles and rockslides, clearing smaller rockslides and shoring up the washout at Little Qualicum Creek.

In the meantime, ICF has been working with Tseshahat representatives to gather drone images and LiDAR (Light Detecting and Ranging imaging) data for the Corridor through the Alberni Valley. In fall 2024, ICF and Tseshahat representatives travelled as much of the Port Alberni Sub as possible by hiraail and on foot. In many parts, the corridor is in relatively good shape. However, there are still areas that need urgent maintenance through the emergency access funding proposal.

Capital Regional District (CRD) staff are talking to ICF about our participation in significant transportation planning exercises in the CRD in 2025, including the CRD Rapid Transit Plan. Potential questions to discuss include how the Corridor from View Royal to Goldstream Park can be future proofed and protected, and how it can be considered in future transportation planning in the CRD, potentially including LRT.



Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) completed a photo shoot and prepared a beautiful video of the Corridor as part of their public engagement process. That video is accessible on their website.

Freight rail operations continue in the Nanaimo area with our operating partner Southern Rail of Vancouver Island (SVI). SVI have approximately 1200 railcars travelling to/from Vancouver Island per year. Rail cars travel by barge to Vancouver Island where they are transloaded into trucks at Wellcox Yard for distribution or delivered by rail to clients for off-loading. Cargo shipped between Annacis Island and Wellcox Yard largely includes animal feed, forest products, aggregates, fertilizer and propane. SVI also provides ongoing maintenance of the Corridor throughout the year.

# Community Relations:

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## Strengthening Community Ties Through Action, Celebration, and Transparency

ICF sponsored and participated in the Ports Canada Conference on Port Alberni Sept 19th. It was fantastic to meet people involved in goods movement from all across Canada. ICF was a gold sponsor of the Canadian Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) Summit in October. Our CEO spoke on a panel at VIEA on transportation planning and the need for system redundancies on Vancouver Island.

ICF hosted two major charity events this year. The annual Tour de Rock Golf Tournament raised \$44,000 dollars for the Children's Cancer Society. With a little help from Santa and a lot of help from community partners and the Old City Quarter, the "Fill the Caboose" Holiday Food Drive raised \$6,500 and 515 Kg in food donations for Loaves and Fishes in Nanaimo. We're grateful to our partners and colleagues at SVI for their outstanding support in these events.

ICF acknowledges that in past years there has sometimes been insufficient public information about our work. In 2024 we took our first steps to improve how and when we share information with the public, starting with regular social media posts on Facebook, quarterly newsletters, and this annual report. We hope to extend that work in 2025, and to update our website.

# Administration:



2024 was an important year administratively, as we continued to formalize our internal processes and documentation procedures. We researched and amalgamated our information on Corridor encumbrances, which now allows us to access more consistent and detailed information on easements, rights of way, leases and other encumbrances for the whole Corridor. To date we've compiled information on thousands of individual encumbrances on the 289km of track. This work is ongoing.

Better tracking of lease information has allowed us to identify and renegotiate outdated leases and recover untracked accounts receivable. In the longer term, this work will aid ICF's financial stability and ability to better manage and maintain this incredible corridor that we all care about so much.

# Board:



We welcomed new Board members Will Cole-Hamilton, Mike Keohane and Ian Morrison and thank the outgoing Board members Tyler Brown and Aaron Stone as well as Co-Chair Daniel Arbour for their service. (Being a Director on ICF's Board is a time-consuming and we hope, a rewarding activity). We're grateful for the community and First Nations leaders who join us to provide guidance to ICF as Directors.



"Fill the Caboose" Christmas Food Drive Nanaimo Station 2024



# Strategic Priorities for 2025:

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We are committed to increasing ICF's relevance and service to the communities we serve. As part of the ICF's strategic review, we are putting forward six goals to guide our operating activities for 2025.



## **Strengthen Financial Stability and Organizational Management.**

PATH: Asset Management & Tracking  
PATH: Recognize and secure our asset values  
PATH: Improve administrative systems  
PATH: Support and utilize the Board's capacity



## **Stronger Relationships with First Nations Members**

PATH: Work collaboratively to address concerns  
PATH: Seek Federal/Provincial engagement  
PATH: Acknowledge and honour the rightsholder role of the Nations



## **Better Communications with Members and Partners**

PATH: Members  
PATH: Public  
PATH: Governments  
PATH: Operating Partners



## **Increasing Short Term & Immediate Use of the Corridor**

PATH: Encourage Alternative Prototypes – Short Term Uses of Rail, Adjacent Lands, and Stations  
PATH: Partnerships for care and use everywhere possible



## **Keeping the Corridor Together and Relevant**

PATH: Shared Vision Project Coordination  
PATH: Alberni Sub Maintenance Project  
PATH: CRD Transportation Planning



## **Corridor Maintenance**

PATH: Ongoing Maintenance  
PATH: Monitoring and Patrols

## Final Comments

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It has been an incredible and busy year with many new projects and work happening all along the Corridor. As ICF welcomed a new CEO this year, building relationships was our major priority. We've been travelling up and down the corridor for meetings and events, breaking bread with our members, partners and other interested parties, and listening to people's concerns and enthusiastic ideas about the Corridor. We know this work has only begun and it will continue to be the most important part of our work at ICF in 2025, as all parties work to resolve long-standing issues, make progress on reversion, and seek a shared vision for the future of the Corridor.

Visit us at [www.islandrail.ca](http://www.islandrail.ca)



Malahat tunnel. Photo credit: CVRD/Bones Creative.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of renewal



**ISLAND  
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