

NEWSLETTER



Island Corridor Foundation – Winter 2026

Last summer and fall have been eventful and meaningful for us at the Island Corridor Foundation! From traveling across the country to the Hamilton Steel Summit, to meeting with members, partners and communities across Vancouver Island, we've had the privilege of engaging in important conversations about the Corridor's past, present, and future. Your continued support has been invaluable as we respond to new challenges, advance key initiatives, and strengthen connections across the region. We're pleased to share several updates from our work this season and, as always, welcome your questions and ideas.



Shared Vision Project

Work on a shared vision in the Capital Regional District reached a major milestone on December 11, 2025 when regional parties signed the Reconciliation Corridor Agreement. Esquimalt (Kosapsum) Nation, Songhees Nation, five regional mayors and the Capital Regional District committed to exploring a passenger rail service on the Corridor from Langford to VicWest together. The initiative would include the realignment of the Corridor away from the residential area of Kosapsum Nation's reserve lands. Next steps include a technical feasibility study that the partners will commission in 2026, including analysis of potential transit-oriented development opportunities for the Nations and the

potential for the Corridor to provide critical transportation services. We will continue to support this work in 2026 and look forward to establishing a future for the Corridor through the Capital Regional District that delivers shared prosperity for the region, while respecting the rights and interests of First Nations.

In June 2025, we hosted an All-Parties' meeting in Nanaimo, where the 14 First Nations and 5 Regional Districts who are working on the Shared Vision were able to meet and share their work to date. Following that meeting, we continue to support all the active regional tables in the next steps of their respective visions.

Federal Government Engagement

It was a privilege to be invited by then Transportation Minister Chrystia Freeland to attend the Hamilton Steel Summit with industry leaders in the rail and ship building sectors. There was great engagement about the many opportunities for Vancouver Island in Nation building efforts.

We are very grateful to the local Members of Parliament throughout Vancouver Island who have been meeting with us and for their interest and support of the Corridor. We hope that the value of our Vancouver Island Corridor can be recognized and prioritized in Ottawa.



VIEA Conference

In October 2025, our team participated in the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance conference in beautiful downtown Nanaimo, discussing the future of transportation as part of Vision 2050. Together with regional leaders, planners, and industry experts, we examined opportunities to improve mobility across Vancouver Island, enhance emergency preparedness, and support more resilient, connected communities. The dialogue highlighted the importance of integrated transportation planning that reflects the Island's evolving needs and long-term growth.



Leadership Updates

We were pleased to welcome two new Board members last fall. Richard Hardy is Director for Electoral Area B (Lazo North) in the Comox Valley Regional District and elected Councillor with Komoks First Nation. Sid Tobias is the Mayor of View Royal and sits on the Capital Regional District Board.

Wesley Ridge Wildfire



In August last year, the Wesley Ridge wildfire swept across the slope behind Cameron Lake and destroyed two historic railway trestle bridges while damaging two others. We are saddened by the loss of these trestles, which were important pieces of the Corridor's history and valued local landmarks, and recognize the recreational, and heritage value they held for our communities. At the same time, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the BC Wildfire Service and all firefighters whose efforts protected lives, properties, and surrounding forests during the blaze.

ICF remains committed to working with BC Wildfire Service, local First Nations, Regional Districts, and community partners to prioritize public safety, and explore appropriate options for bank stabilization, repair, or replacement. We will continue to share updates with the community as plans progress and appreciate the support and concern already shown by our partners and neighbors.

Hi-Rail Bus

A Hi-Rail Bus is a passenger vehicle designed to operate on both conventional roads and railway tracks, featuring retractable steel rail wheels for a seamless transition between the two modes. It is a flexible transportation option that can run on existing rail infrastructure and bypass any impasses by running on the road where necessary, combining practicality with efficiency. The successful Hi-Rail operation along Seton Lake near Lillooet – a partnership between local First Nations and CN – has transformed a challenging mountain journey into a safe and reliable 40-minute rail trip. As the Lillooet example shows, technology demonstrates the potential to enhance travel across communities. A Hi-Rail Bus could connect Vancouver Island's railway heritage with practical opportunities for future community use.



Alberni & Ladysmith Show

In September 2025, we showcased a Hi-Rail Bus in Alberni and Ladysmith, giving communities and stakeholders a first-hand look at a potential transportation option for Vancouver Island. The demonstrations opened great conversations and creative ideas about how the Corridor could be used in some Hi-Rail service, particularly for tourism, and if a Hi-Rail Bus could support economic development, enhance visitor experiences, and strengthen local connections.

Discussions highlighted the importance of storytelling along the Corridor, where a Hi-Rail tourist service could help share the region's history, culture, and character, alongside the need for a strong business case. Stakeholders also explored how Hi-Rail passenger service could complement other initiatives, including the Hullo passenger ferry, to create a more integrated travel experience. Our team also took part in the Alberni Fall Fair and Parade, bringing the Hi-Rail Bus directly to residents and celebrating the partnerships driving this work forward.





Nanaimo Trail Expansion

Work is now complete to expand the south Nanaimo nature path beside rail and make new connections from Columbia Street to Bing Kee Street and down to Seventh Street. The trail runs alongside the rail corridor on land owned by the ICF and managed by the City, and is heavily used by pedestrians, including children traveling to nearby schools.

Developed in collaboration with the City, Southern Railway of Vancouver Island (SVI), local groups, and contractors, the expansion reflects ongoing efforts to enhance sustainable, practical transportation options on Vancouver Island and to increase public access to the Corridor.

Ladysmith Station Update

In February 2025, ICF was awarded \$1 million from the BC Governments' Rural Economic Diversification Program (REDIP) to support a renovation of the Ladysmith Train Station. The Station, which is currently not occupied, will be renovated to create a vibrant Community Hub for co-working, making connections, and local gathering. Our anchor tenants are the Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce and the Ladysmith Visitor Centre, who have provided amazing local leadership on this project. To date we have completed a heritage assessment of the station, and a Master Plan for how the Station should be integrated with the surrounding Transfer Beach area neighborhood and arts district. We aim to issue an RFP for construction early in 2026, with the building opening early in 2027.



Corridor Maintenance



In collaboration with SVI and local contractors, ICF completed many cleanups throughout the Corridor. These efforts improved safety, accessibility, and visibility along the Corridor.

Our Hi-Rail Gradall with cutting head has now completed a single pass, clearing down the centre of track for the majority of Corridor from Victoria to Courtenay. In some areas, we have been able to clear up to 15 feet on either side of tracks.

Looking ahead, we plan to continue cutting blackberry bushes, scotch broom, and

other overgrown vegetation along the Corridor. This will help maintain clear sight lines, ensure culverts are functional, and keep the Corridor open and accessible for a range of future uses. This work will help us be prepared for climate events like fires and floods.

We're exploring support from the Regional Districts and partnerships with our First Nations members to collaboratively complete this work. Community input is welcome as we continue these efforts to maintain and safeguard the Corridor.

ICF serves the communities of Vancouver Island and gratefully acknowledges that we work on the traditional and unceded territories of many diverse First Nations, including the Kosapsum (Esquimalt), Songhees, Malahat, Cowichan Tribes, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Stz'uminus, Penelakut Tribe, Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, Qualicum, K'ómoks, Hupacasath, and Tseshaht. We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples have stewarded these lands since time immemorial and are committed to strong Indigenous partnerships and relationships based on principles of Reconciliation.

