

ISLAND CORRIDOR BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE



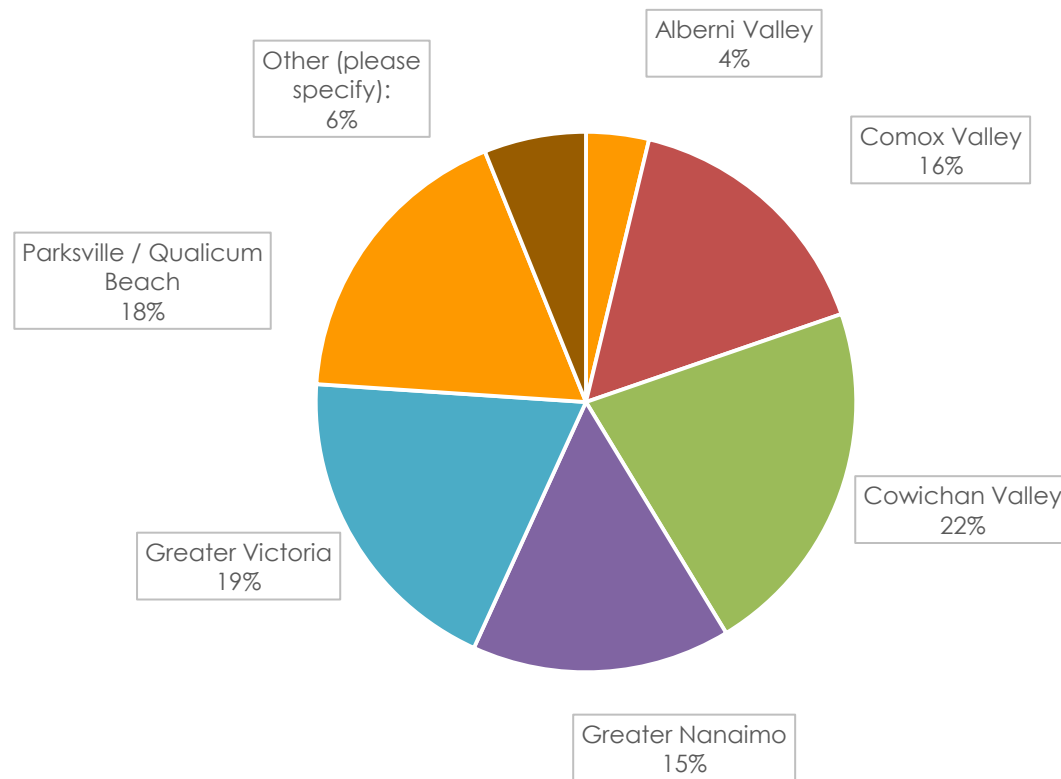
Feedback Form Results – May, 2017

About the Feedback Form:

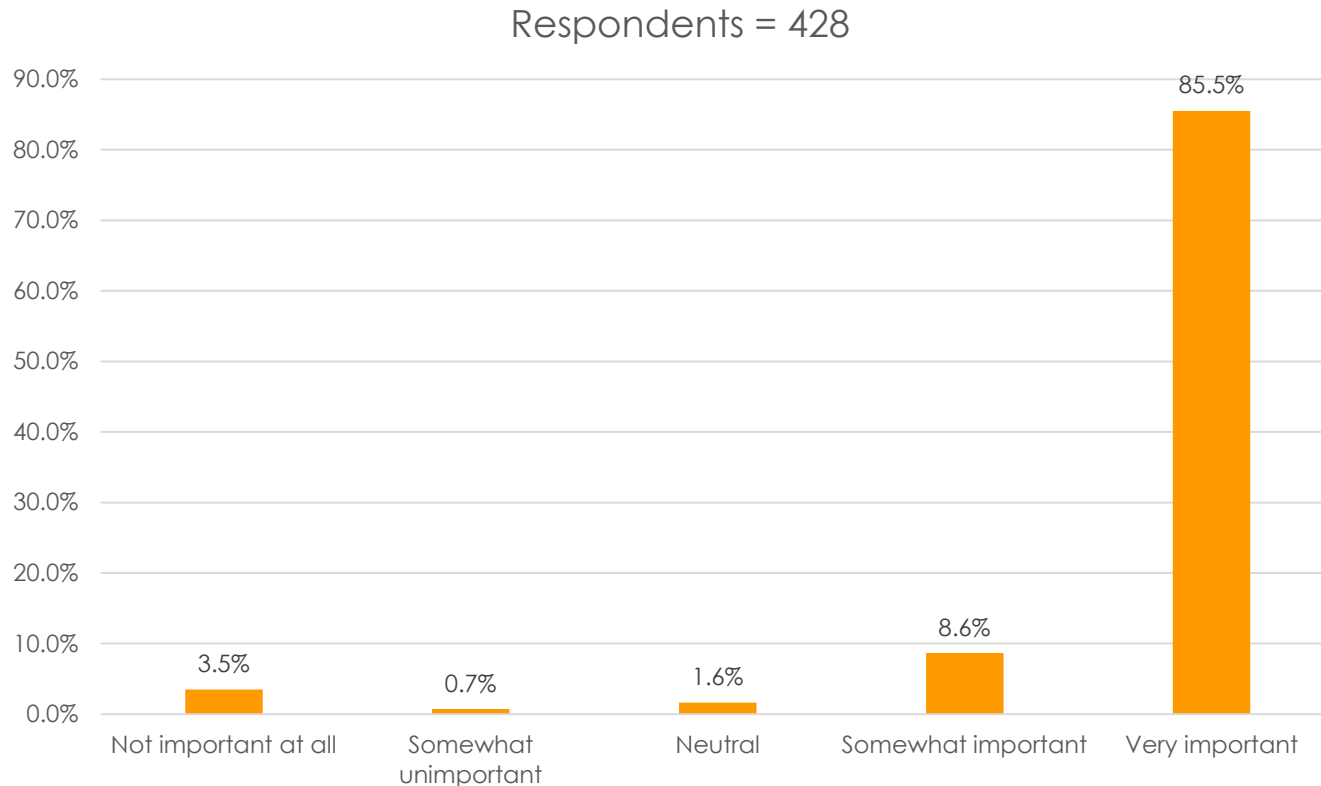
- Available on the ICF website April 7 - May 15, 2017
- ICF actively promoted the feedback form through Facebook advertising, email broadcasts, local media and at the AVICC conference (April 8) and the ICF Annual General Meeting (April 27)
- Total Respondents – 438 (goal was 400) 400 completes in market research using random sampling yields reasonable confidence for large populations (+/- 5% margin of error)
- Though open to the public (as opposed to random sampling), 438 completes still considered a strong response
- Self-selection bias in the results - this occurs when the characteristics that cause respondents to self-select creates abnormal conditions in the group.
- ICF's priority was to provide as many people as possible with an opportunity to share their thoughts, comments and feedback.

In which geographic area do you reside?

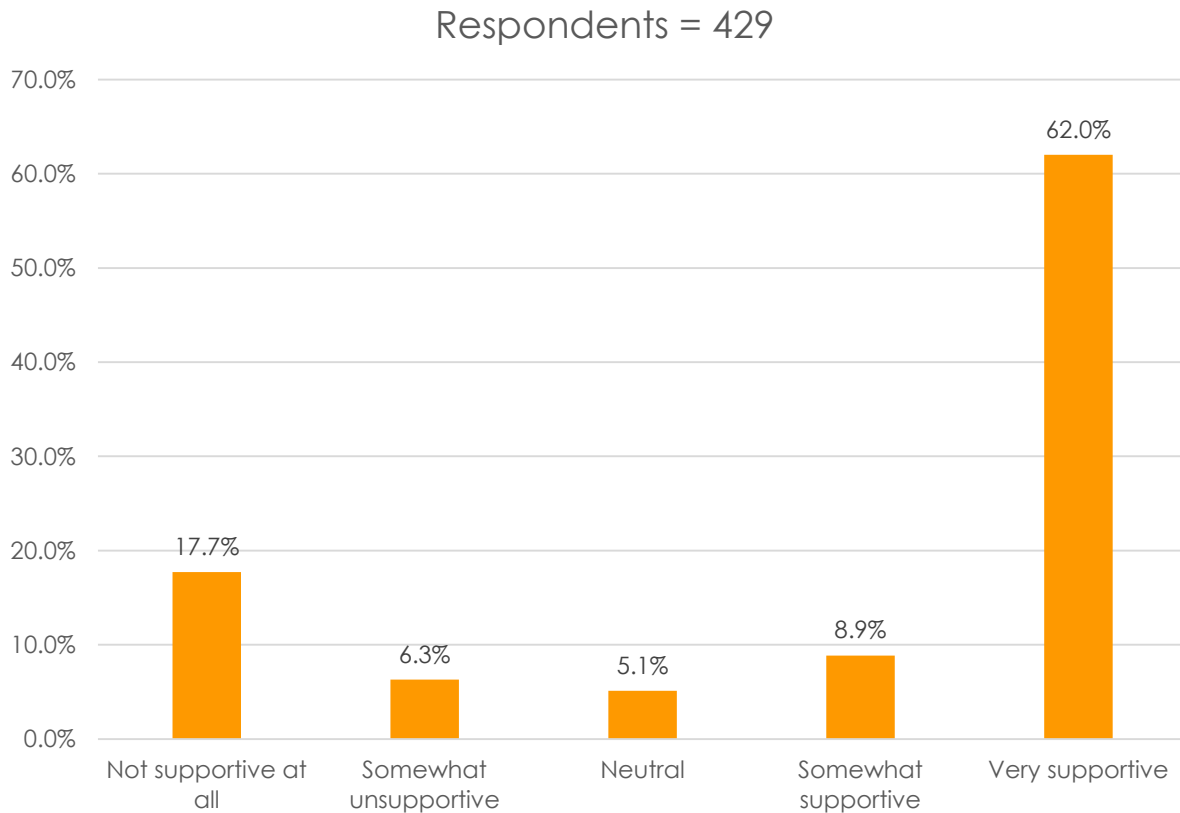
Respondents to this question = 426



How important is it to you that the Island rail corridor is preserved for public use in the long-term future?

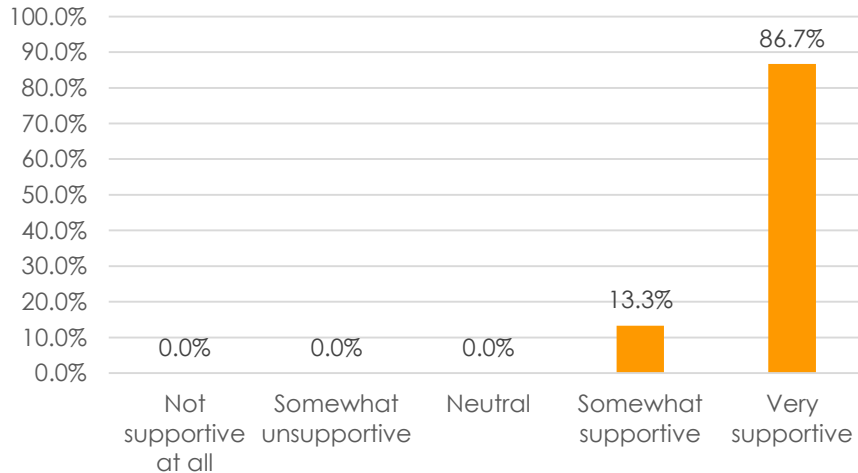


How supportive are you of rail service on Vancouver Island?



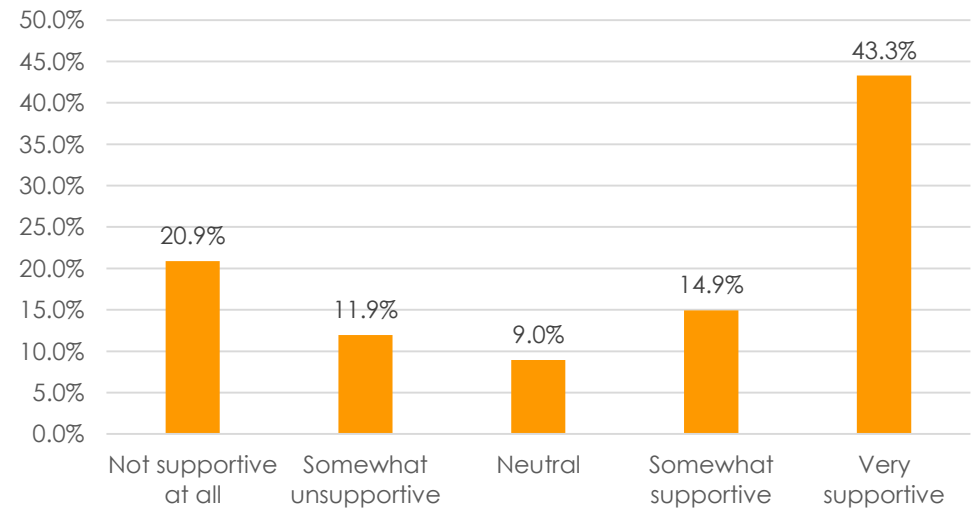
Support for Rail Service by Area

Alberni Valley (15 respondents)



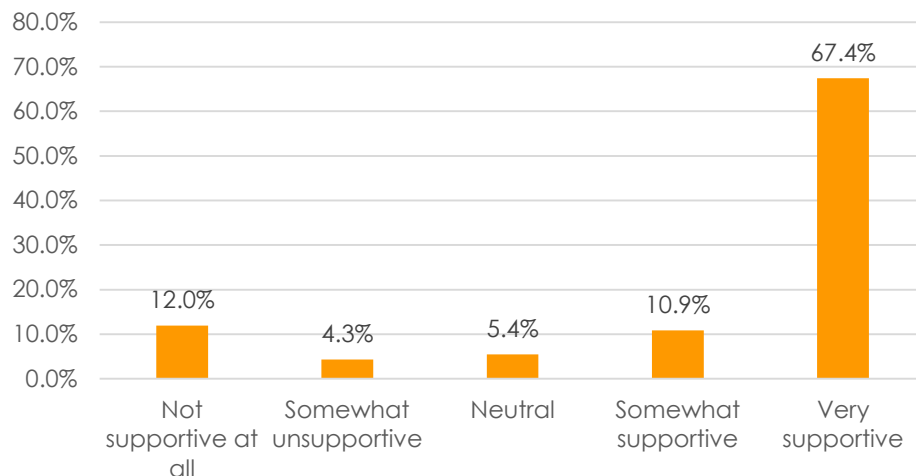
Note – The survey responses from the Alberni Valley were augmented by a written submission prepared on behalf of over 125 members of the Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society (WVIHS), Alberni Pacific Railway (APR) and Port Sub Railroaders, The East End Track Gang (EETG) a division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association (CRHA), and the Friends of the Port Sub (FOPS).

Comox Valley (67 respondents)

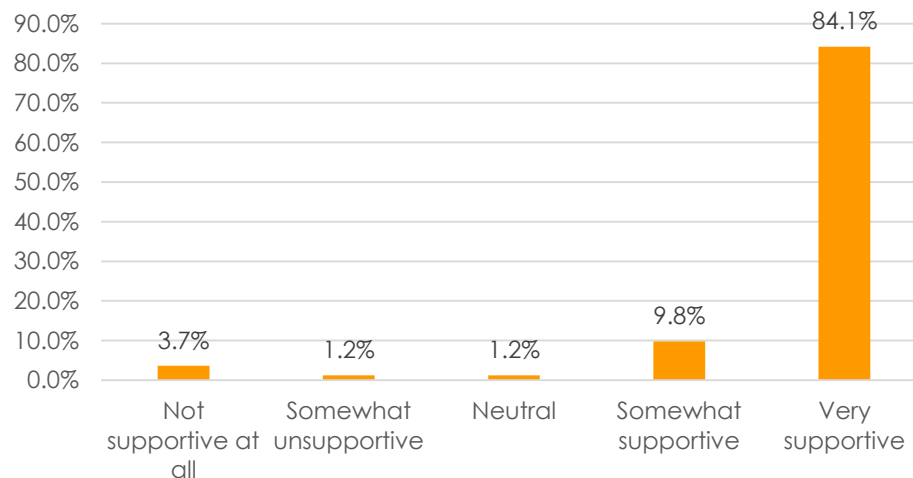


Support for Rail Service by Area

Cowichan Valley (92 respondents)

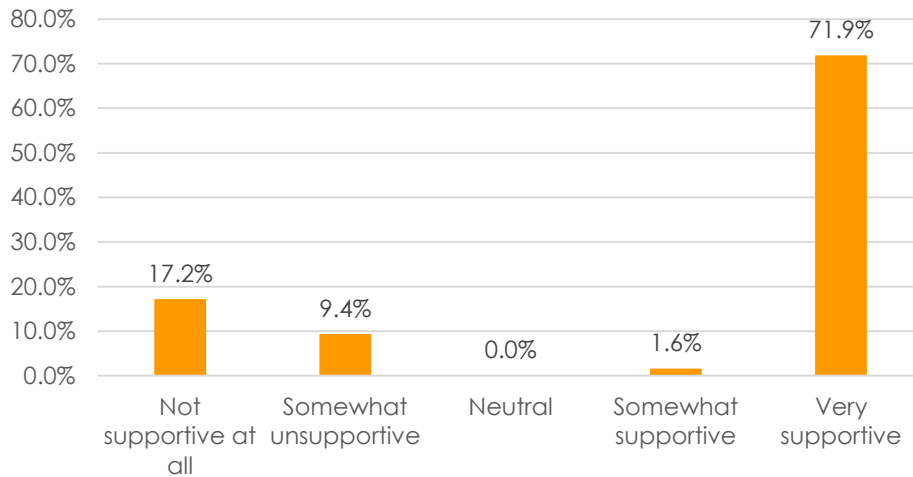


Greater Victoria (82 respondents)

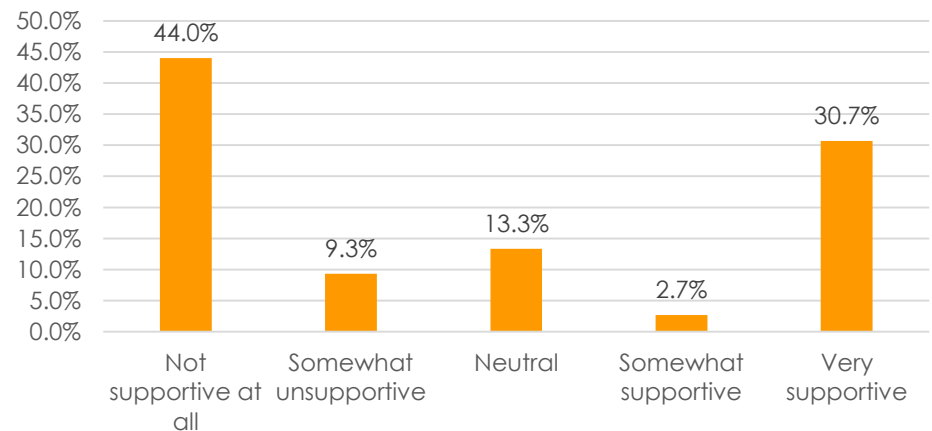


Support for Rail Service by Area

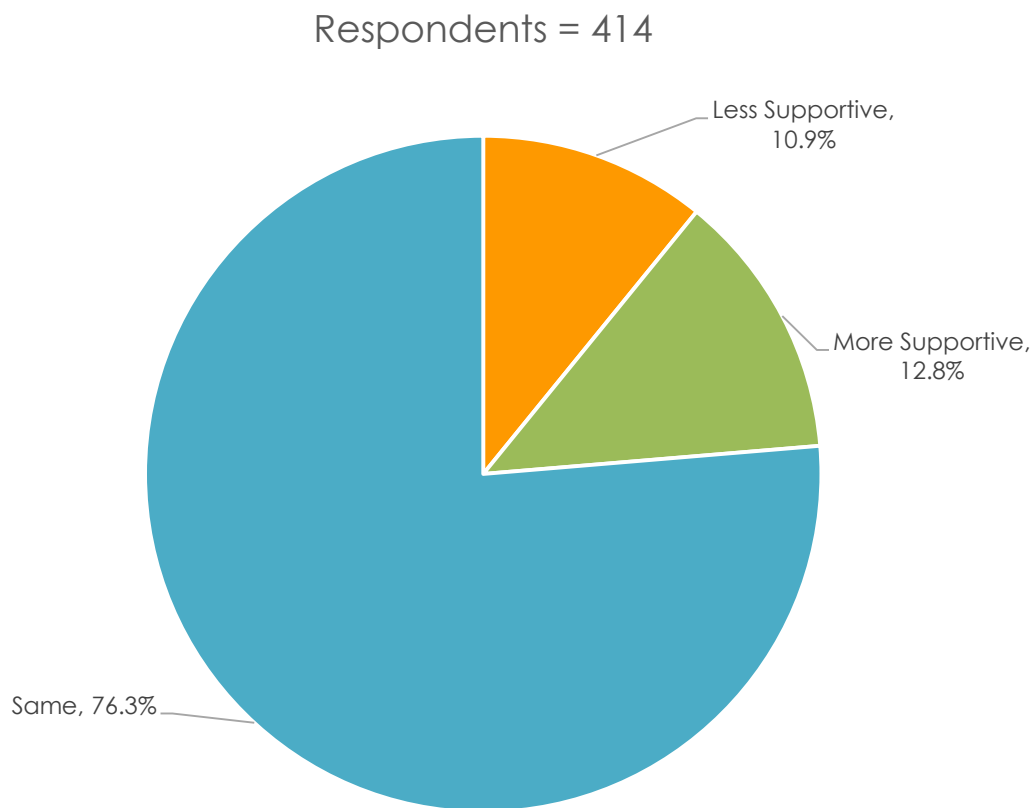
Greater Nanaimo (64 respondents)



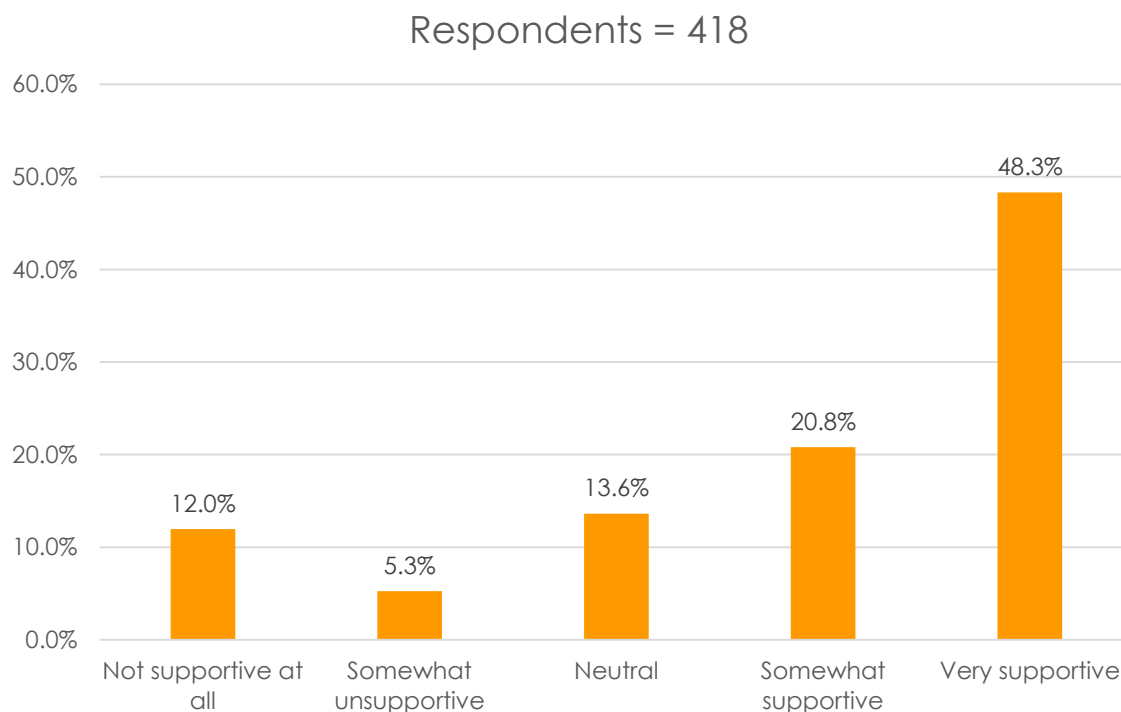
Parksville / Qualicum Beach (75 respondents)



Would your level of support for rail service on Vancouver Island change if taking an incremental approach to track infrastructure upgrades meant that not all communities / regions could be served initially?



How supportive are you of the continued development of rail-with-trails within the corridor?



Imagine you had \$100 to spend on the four focus areas - how would you spend it?

Focus Area	Average (Mean) Amount Allocated
Rail Infrastructure & Services	\$60.35
Heritage (train stations)	\$15.54
Rail-With-Trails	\$32.45
Corridor Communities (charitable/community projects)	\$12.79

Goals – Rail Infrastructure & Services

Commonly-mentioned themes

- General support for prioritizing rail repairs/upgrades and services incrementally based on economic feasibility; seeking government funding accordingly.
- Interest in (as first phase) CRD Victoria/Langford commuter service and passenger/freight service between Duncan/Victoria or Nanaimo/Victoria; future focus on services to Courtenay and Port Alberni.
- Support for tourism trains where feasible (some examples given - cruise ship excursion, ski trains, wine trains).
- Improve corridor maintenance (vegetation, trees, litter).
- Modernize service if established (scheduling, ticketing apps, bike racks, food service).
- Importance of First Nations relations, importance of reaching a settlement with Snaw-Naw-As.
- An element of support for removing rail and focusing more (or exclusively) on trail – not nearly as broadly supported as restoring rail, but still a key theme.

Goals – Heritage (train stations)

Commonly mentioned themes:

- Support for continued community/heritage group involvement in rehabilitation/improvement initiatives; pursue grants.
- Support for maintaining current assets to prevent decay; more major renovations and/or construction of new stations where/when warranted (Ladysmith & Courtenay as priority for renovation; Victoria as priority for construction if needed).
- Interest in expanding leases (commercial and/or community uses, such as museums). Food/beverage services received many mentions.
- Integration of heritage information and services for tourists and trail users.
- Suggestions to use locally sourced materials, Island-based suppliers and incorporate “green” technologies.
- Addition of park & ride facilities, along with bike storage.
- Some suggestions to limit work in this area; focus more on train service/infrastructure.

Goals – Rail With Trails

Commonly mentioned themes

- Strongly opposing viewpoints:
 - Concern that trails may replace rails; that restoring rail service and infrastructure should be the priority
 - Concern that rail is not viable and should be replaced with trails (support for this suggestion appears to be strongest north of Nanaimo)

For continued rail-with-trails:

- Develop plan in consultation with communities, including how trail will be addressed where there are bridges & trestles.
- Continue to develop and market rail-with-trail system; seen as key tourism asset.
- Support for seeking third party funding and engaging with local partners as much as possible.
- Key trail issues: accessibility (designed for users of all ages & abilities), safety, mapping, user facilities (rest-stops/washrooms), signage (including heritage information), connectivity and ensuring access is for non-motorized use only.

Goals – Corridor communities / charitable projects

Commonly mentioned themes:

- Several suggestions to limit or not make this a major focus; focus more on train service/infrastructure.
- Support for public education programs to build awareness about the importance/benefits of rail service and the rail corridor.
- Engage more with communities, First Nations and local partners to identify and fund projects, and to improve communications (specific mentions of employment and business opportunities with First Nations).
- Host, participate in or sponsor community events where there are opportunities to raise awareness.
- Corridor beautification in urban areas/near stations (parks, community gardens, picnic areas).
- Other ideas – free/low cost travel to support charitable projects; special event trains with proceeds to charities; engage with schools for work experience programs; support local tourism & trail initiatives; support local fundraisers that involve cycling/running/walking events within the corridor.

Other Advice for the Board

- Again, strongly opposing viewpoints, ranging from:
 - Focus on securing funding to restore rail incrementally (“*just get something going, somewhere*”); start small and build momentum and support for subsequent phases.
- To
 - Remove rail in favour of rails IO trails (conversion). This suggestion appears to be supported most strongly on the Victoria sub, north of Nanaimo.
- Recommendation that any future service terminating in Victoria include efficient pedestrian access and/or a shuttle bus to downtown.
- Consider other ways to raise funds to restore the railway (some examples: crowdsourcing, “buy a tie” sponsorships, property sales or limited development within the corridor, timber harvesting).
- Showcase and promote a vision, be bold.
- Improve transparency and communications; consider revisions to governance structure (suggestion to include technical advisory body).
- Strengthen relationships with communities and First Nations.

What Happens Next?

- Rail operator (SVI) to provide options (including cost estimates) for rail infrastructure upgrades that align with the survey results and their own business plan/interests.
- ICF staff to prepare 5-year financial projections for each option.
- ICF Board will receive and review the survey results, rail infrastructure options and related financial projections.
- ICF Board will select a preferred rail infrastructure option and set goals/performance indicators for the Foundation's Business Plan.
- Business Plan completed and released.
- ICF to commence implementation of Business Plan, including securing funding for the preferred infrastructure option.