

News Release

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Community engagement for the Island Rail Corridor begins in the Cowichan region

DUNCAN, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) will be hosting an open house and online survey to gather input towards the development of a shared vision for the Island Rail Corridor in the Cowichan region.

Initiated by the Province of British Columbia, the CVRD planning process is one of five regional district exercises taking place across Vancouver Island. The provincial and federal governments, First Nations and the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) are also participating in planning efforts. The CVRD being is supported by a consulting team (Stantec Consulting Ltd., K I Squared Advisory Inc., MODUS Planning Design and Engagement Inc., Bone Creative and About Here) with expertise in engineering, land use planning, transportation, First Nations consultation, and community engagement.

“We welcome this process of collaboration and consultation to help shape the future of the Island Rail Corridor, as it is a complex issue that affects everyone in our region,” said Aaron Stone, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “We look forward to hearing from residents and including their perspectives into the future vision for the corridor.”

The process began in the spring of 2024 with a series of planning and background studies on the topics of rail history, transportation, land use, remediation, climate change, and the environment. Consultation with stakeholders began in the summer with a series of interviews to gather input from diverse perspectives throughout the CVRD. Through these interviews, stakeholders have provided feedback on the themes of transportation, economic development, agriculture, tourism, the environment, utilities and infrastructure.

The length of corridor in the CVRD is 71,780m, of which 4,850m bisect reserve lands of the Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, and Stz’uminus First Nation. Feedback is being sought about priorities for the future with regards to transportation and other potential uses for the portions of the corridor in the CVRD that are outside of First Nation reserve lands.

The CVRD will launch an online survey on September 1, and an open house will be held at Charles Hoey Park (outside of the Cowichan Valley Museum) on September 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The online survey will be open to the community for the month of September through the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVRDIslandCorridor>

The planning process will culminate in a final report with recommendations which will be presented to the CVRD Board in early 2025. Together with the planning efforts of other jurisdictions, this work has the potential to benefit the CVRD community as well as the whole of Vancouver Island for generations to come.

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