

Plan for a future that includes rail

By Mary-June Pettyfer, Times Colonist February 3, 2011

Re: "Funding alternatives urged to ensure bridge with rail," Jan. 30.

The argument by those opposing the need for rail on the new Johnson Street Bridge reminds me of the controversy years ago about where to locate Victoria's airport, vividly recounted to me by a friend (no longer living).

It had outgrown its first location, today's Lansdowne School and playing fields. A great number of people voted to use the meadowlands of Gordon Head, now the home of the University of Victoria. Those opposed insisted that flying would grow in popularity and require far more land due to future growth of planes, road and air traffic, and noise.

Now the discussion is about trains. Two things are necessary. Bring them across the bridge, and people will come. Secondly, reverse their schedules to arrive in the morning and depart in the afternoon which will lessen the need for parking.

Train commuters will increase if they arrive at Johnson Street, where they can walk or take a bus to offices, shops, appointments, etc., thankful to avoid sitting in traffic for an hour.

The extra cost needed to provide rails over the bridge is a bargain compared to the costs we will have to pay later when we realize how much we need them. Across this continent, rail transport is experiencing a renaissance as communities find the benefits of a transport system that delivers people to their work without the car.

It is time we followed their example and as with the siting of our airport, embrace the future.

Mary-June Pettyfer Victoria

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