

LRT benefits outstrip busway option

BY BOB TROTTER, TIMES COLONIST DECEMBER 18, 2010

Bus rapid transit has not proved cheaper than rail. Ottawa has paid \$300 million for busways, the of an equivalent rail network. And the busways lost riders.

Surface light rail can provide rapid transit services or streetcar services or both on the same track network. B.C. Transit's rapid transit plan presents two technologies: buses or rail. At the community liaison committee, an official stated the region's needs meet the upper capacity for bus rapid transit and the lower capacity for light rail transit.

Drivers switch to light rail transit but not to bus rapid transit. In St. Louis, it was found 79 per cent riders on their 35-kilometre LRT lines were new to transit. Bus rapid transit draws about three per more riders.

LRT lines bring renewal to downtowns and high density development around stations, the kind of Victoria and Saanich councils and the CRD growth strategy want.

Low-floor LRT is totally accessible; wheelchairs and strollers board with everyone else. No time needed to deploy a ramp. LRT is green. Electric power means no local greenhouse-gas emissions.

LRT has also demonstrated a higher farebox return than buses. Rail rapid transit and local streetcars will give our city renewal downtown and a sustainable density pattern.

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