

Rapid transit must make people want to leave their cars

Published: **October 15, 2010 6:00 AM**

Before we embark on further transit investments I would like to make the following two suggestions to increase the efficacy of the proposed system.

1. It must be built mostly off-line and entail a separate right-of-way. Cost-benefit analysis for transportation entails examining the benefits and costs of an intervention over a 20- to 25-year time horizon.

The costs entail construction, property and right-of-way costs and differences in operating costs. The benefits entail reduced vehicle operating costs, delay costs and accident savings for both transit (rail or busways) and road users.

One of the most overlooked benefits of transit investment is that it frees up road capacity for commerce. However, as with road projects there is always the risk that the disruption to service during construction is so severe that the subsequent time savings and vehicle operating costs savings of the project are not made up during the remainder of the analysis period.

There have been instances where the disruption to service for bridge rehabilitation or replacement are so severe that the subsequent benefits upon completion are masked by this interruption. Another example is the recent construction of road upgrades in View Royal that is still continuing to cause substantial travel and vehicle operating cost increases.

We need to move towards a dynamic system where we have separate road and rapid transit corridors and use buses as feeders to the overall transportation system.

2. Encourage density along the corridors. In order to maximize the effectiveness of investment and curtail urban sprawl, we need to encourage density. We need to encourage compact communities such that we do not need to use our vehicles to conduct our daily activities. We should be able to choose to use our vehicles and not be forced to use them to conduct our daily lives.

Avi Ickovich

Langford