

# Change in Dayliner direction considered

by [Jenn Marshall - Nanaimo News Bulletin](#)

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The Island Corridor Foundation hopes to reverse the Southern Railway of Vancouver Island Dayliner service so it starts in Nanaimo every morning instead of Victoria.

“It’s all part of trying to find ways to improve rail service on Vancouver Island,” said Graham Bruce, executive director. “It makes sense and I think there’s good demand for it from the general public.”

The foundation wants the train to leave Nanaimo around 6 a.m. and arrive in Victoria around 8 a.m., picking up commuters along the way.

The train would then do its regular route from Victoria to Courtenay and be back in Victoria in time to do a return run to Nanaimo.

Bruce said reversing the run makes sense because many people live in the mid-Island, but work in the Capital Regional District.

“There’s over 200 people in the Comox Valley who work at the Esquimalt naval base,” he said.

Once the Nanaimo to Victoria commuter run is established, the second phase would be to get a second train on the route, which would leave Nanaimo shortly after the first train and then make commuter runs between Langford and downtown Victoria.

The plan also includes moving the railway’s maintenance operations from Victoria to Nanaimo.

Bruce said centralized operations make a

possible a third phase – excursion trains taking people from Nanaimo’s soon-to-be-built cruise ship terminal to Victoria and a tourist run to Cameron Lake.

The foundation is developing business plans for the first phase of the service with Southern Rail, the company that operates the railway’s freight and passenger services.

Marilyn Hutchinson, the City of Nanaimo’s economic development officer, said the service change would benefit Nanaimo residents.

She said many residents have told her they commute to work in Victoria either on a daily or weekly basis. In 2007, 252 residents responded to a survey about a float plane service to Victoria, with 70 per cent supporting the idea and 84 per cent willing to pay between \$50 and \$75 for a one-way ticket.

The reverse train service model could also bring more tourists up to Nanaimo from Victoria for the day, Hutchinson added.

Catherine Kaloutsky, spokeswoman for Via Rail, the company that holds the contract from Southern Rail for providing passenger train services, said there are no immediate plans to change the service.

“It’s something that certainly can be looked at, but it requires discussion,” she said. “Normally, we work at least eight months ahead of time for our schedules.”