

\$62 Million/km!?

Why is CRD LRT Cost Estimate so Astronomical?

By Louis Guilbault, June 2011



The May 2011 SNC-Lavalin/HDR Engineering study compares per-kilometre cost of Victoria LRT with the Edmonton North, Ottawa Metro, Calgary West and Vancouver Canada lines. All four of these other Canadian lines are completely or largely underground or elevated. This is emphatically not the case in Victoria. Recent at-grade tram lines in Salt Lake City, Charlotte and Norfolk VA cost around \$30 million/km. France has proven over and over that you can lay down high-quality tramways for around \$30 million/km figure. Other developed countries like Italy and Spain also pull this off. Why can't we?

SNC-Lavalin (Montreal)/HDR Engineering (Omaha) seems incapable of coming up with a reasonable cost estimate.

Recent Tramway Costs

| City | System/ Line | Completion Year | Cost/ \$million/km |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Angers, France | Avrillé-La Roseraie | 2010 | €20.7 (appr. Cdn\$27.7) |
| Bergen, Norway | Nestun | 2010 | NK 224 (appr. Cdn\$37.5) |
| Brest, France | Métropole | 2011 | €26.1 (appr. Cdn\$35) |
| Charlotte NC | Lynx Blue Line | 2007 | US\$30 |
| Dallas | Green Line | 2010 | US\$40.2 |
| Dijon, France | Chenôve/Queitgny | 2013 | €20 (appr. Cdn\$26.8) |
| Florence, Italy | Scandicci | 2010 | €22.9 (appr. Cdn\$30.7) |
| Lens region, NE France | Liéven/Beuvry | 2011 | €17.2 (appr. Cdn\$23.5) |
| Minneapolis | Hiawatha | 2004 | US\$37.3 |
| Mulhouse, France | Soléa | 2006 | €20.7 (appr. Cdn\$28.2) |
| Norfolk VA | Tide | 2011 | US\$28.6 |
| Phoenix | METRO | 2008 | US\$43.5 |
| Portland | Green Line | 2009 | US\$43.35 |
| Salt Lake City | Airport TRAX | 2013 | US\$25.9-31 |
| Tours, France | Fil Bleu | 2013 | €21.8 (appr. Cdn\$29.72) |
| Victoria | Western Comm. | ? | \$62 |
| Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain | EuskoTran | 2008 | €16.5 (appr. Cdn\$22.4) |

Other firms build high-quality tramways at prices that don't gouge taxpayers; try these:

| Consultant | Base | Tram Projects |
|---------------------|---------------|---|
| LTK | Philadelphia | Houston, Los Angeles, Portland, San Jose, Twin Cities |
| PGH Wong | San Francisco | Salt Lake City |
| Parsons Brinkerhoff | New York City | Norfolk |
| S&ME | Raleigh | Charlotte |
| Systra | Paris | Bordeaux, Brest, Le Havre, Lyon, Mulhouse, Tours |

Sources

Angers: railway-technology.com/projects/angers. Angers' metro. population is appr. 283,000.

Bergen: Taplin, Michael; applrguk.co.uk/"les/Irta erg three decades of Irt update - web site.pdf

Brest: systra.com/Brest-Tramway-France?lang=fr

Charlotte: Slade, David; Charlotte "nds light-rail success; Post and Courier; July 9, 2008

Dallas: Schlosser, Nicole; Dallas light rail opens on time, under budget; Metro Magazine; Jan. 2011

Denver: eastcorridor.com/media/uploads/main/pdf

Dijon: railwaygazette.com/nc/news/single-view/view/brest-and-dijon-award-joint-tram-order.html

Lens: railwaygazette.com/nc/news/single-view/view/tram-projects-planned-in-northern-france.html

Minneapolis: www.metrocouncil.org/about/facts/HiawathaLRTFacts.pdf

Mulhouse: www.systra.com/IMG/pdf/Ang_-_Mulhouse_BD.pdf. Mulhouse's metro. pop. is appr. 278,000

Norfolk: ridethetide.com/about_the_tide/about-the-tide.shtml

Phoenix: valleymetro.org/images/uploads/lightrail_publications/System-Factsheet-011211.pdf

Portland: Rivera, Dylan; Riders pack MAX Green Line on "rst day of service; Oregonian; September 12, 2009

Salt Lake City: railway-technology.com/projects/frontlines-2015. Davidson, Lee; Feds give UTA unexpected, big gi#; Salt Lake Tribune; Dec 27, 2010. Salt Lake's project has a target of building 70 miles (112 km) of commuter and light rail in 7 years, and is on time and under-budget.

Tours: info-projet.fr/2010/tramway-de-tours. Tours' metro population is appr. 300,000.

Victoria: Victoria Regional Rapid Transit Project; BC Transit/Ministry of Transportation/CRD; May 2011.

Vitoria: Young, Tony; applrguk.co.uk/"les/Irta system "le.pdf. Vitoria's metro population is appr. 240,000.