

Rail service a must for Johnson Street Bridge

BY BOB TROTTER, TIMES COLONIST AUGUST 19, 2010

We who advocate rail-based transit are surprised at Victoria city council's continued commitment to the automobile. Rail-based transit has brought new life to cities across North America, drawing major investment in high-density residences and commercial ventures.

Yet council includes three car lanes and no rail in the Johnson Street Bridge plans.

Only rail transit produces valuable transit-oriented development. Drivers leave their cars to use rail transit, both suburban light-rail service and circulating streetcars, but not to use improved bus service. IslandTransformations.Org has the facts and figures in its 2006 study.

A fast and frequent transit service on the E&N would bring shoppers

from Langford into downtown. And the service can be in place years before a line along the Galloping Goose will be.

The auto has been strangling Victoria's downtown for more than 60 years. There is never enough parking to keep businesses alive. The signs are many empty storefronts and many offering services, not goods. Shoppers go to where they can see goods for sale. Yet a new building downtown has a bank and its lobby along an entire city block, a dead zone for shoppers.

Rail-based transit is expensive. But there is a huge return on the investment.

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