



# COMMITTEE REPORT

To: **Mayor and Councillors**

Subject **Arts, Recreation, Culture and Heritage  
Committee - Heritage Railway Project**

File #:

Doc #:

From: Arts, Recreation, Culture and Heritage Committee

Date: August 28, 2023

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## RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve moving forward with the Local Langley City Railway History Signage.

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## SUMMARY:

The Arts, Recreation, Culture and Heritage (ARCH) Committee reviewed the content for the Langley City Railway history signs submitted by Mr. Downing. While the committee members supported the work that had been completed; they believed that the reading level presented would exclude many people including English Language learners from comprehending the information that was being shared.

The recommendation from the community was to keep the reading comprehension between a grade 6 to 9 level for better inclusion. This is a standard that is recognized in other communities.

There are two railways that crossed through Langley, V. V. & E. (Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway) which followed Grade Crescent and the BC Electric Railway which followed Michaud cross Fraser Highway followed down Glover Road.

The map below shows the location of the proposed signs for each walking route. The V.V. & E. will have the same signage in each location, while the BC Electric Railway will have three different messages one on each sign. The proposed signage will be 4' wide x 3' high and 3 mm thick on white aluminum composite printed full colour.



Following is the write-up for V.V.& E. and the write-ups for the three locations along B.C. Electric Railway:

### ***Local Langley City Railway History***

#### ***Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway***

*(All three locations along the V.V. & E. route)*

*Grade Crescent is aptly named as it is laid on the original “grade” of the Vancouver, Victoria, and Eastern Railway (V.V.& E.) line.*

*Chartered in 1897, this railway operated between the Lower Mainland and B.C.’s Kootenay-Boundary region. The V.V.& E. operated through Langley from 1908 to 1933. It was a passenger and freight line with an emphasis on long-distance rather than local service and it often transported logs to sawmills. The railway had a limited impact within Langley Prairie as there were no stations located here. The closest V.V.& E. stations were Cloverdale Station and Lincoln Station (Benz Crescent, Township of Langley). The arrival of the BC Electric Railway in 1910 had a more profound impact on Langley Prairie which became Langley City in 1955.*

*Parts of the V.V.& E. right-of-way were purchased for municipal roads in 1934 at a cost of \$240. The following roads follow the original railbed. (with some minor re-alignments).*

*These include:*

- *Colebrook Road / 50 Avenue (between 192 Street and 200 Street)*
- *Grade Crescent*
- *47 Avenue east of 208 Street*

*There was also a spur line on Grade Crescent near 208 Street which was used for housing logs on railcars that supplied the adjacent Federal Lumber Company (1918 – 1924).*

## **Local Langley City Railway History**

### **BC Electric Railway**

*(Brydon Lagoon Sign)*

*Langley City was initially connected to the rest of the region by two railways. They were the B.C. Electric Railway and the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway (V.V. & E.). These railways carried both passengers and freight. This path follows the old rail bed of the B.C. Electric Railway.*

*It operated its passenger interurban service in Langley between 1910 and 1950. The railway helped fuel the growth of Langley City. It was hydroelectric-powered and provided transportation from Vancouver, all the way to Chilliwack by October 1910.*

*The railway ran to the west on the south side of Brydon Lagoon to 192 Street where Anderson Station stood. To the east, the railway followed what is now Baldi Creek Trail. It ran to Hunter Station at what is now the intersection of 200 Street and Michaud Crescent. From Hunter Station, it followed the north side of Michaud Crescent to Langley Prairie Station. That station is now the location of Timms Community Centre. Leaving Langley Prairie Station the tracks headed northeast along Glover Road.*

*Slowly, with better roads and an increase in cars and trucks, the railway became uneconomical. The ending of service on September 30, 1950, was marked by a large ceremony attended by politicians from the communities served by the railway. The tracks were removed in the early 1980s and this walking path was established.*

## **Local Langley City Railway History**

### **BC Electric Railway**

*(Hunter Station Sign)*

*Langley City was initially connected to the rest of the region by two railways. They were the B.C. Electric Railway and the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway. These railways carried both passengers and freight. This location was the site of Hunter Station, part of the B.C. Electric Railway line.*

*Hunter Station was named after farmer George Hunter who owned Lot 305 on the east side of Hunter Road (now 200 Street) and Michaud Crescent. This pathway, Baldi Creek Trail, is part of the railbed that extended to the northeast along the north side of Michaud Crescent. It ran to the Langley Prairie Station, where Timms Community Centre now stands. To the west, it passed Brydon Lagoon to 192 Street where Anderson Station stood.*

*The B.C. Electric Railway spurred on the development of the area. It provided passenger transportation, carried mail, and was used to ship shingles and lumber produced by the mills. The railway had 55 stations and ran between New Westminster and Chilliwack. There were twelve interurban stations within the Langleys, with only two in what is now Langley City.*

*Improvements in roads and an increase in cars and trucks in the late 1940s made rail transportation less viable. Passenger service ceased in 1950. The tracks were removed in the early 1980s and this pathway was established on the old railbed.*

## **Local Langley City Railway History**

### **BC Electric Railway**

*(Langley Prairie Station Sign)*

*Timms Community Centre was once the location of the Langley Prairie Station on the B.C. Electric Railway line. The railway, which arrived in the spring of 1910, ran between New Westminster and Chilliwack. It carried produce to the Vancouver market and delivered reliable and rapid public transit.*

*The station was briefly named 'Berry' after a prominent local citizen but was renamed three months later to 'Langley Prairie', after Thomas Langley, a Hudson's Bay Company director. The neighbouring stations were Hunter Station to the west (200 Street and Michaud Crescent), and Norris Station (Glover Road and Mufford Crescent) to the east.*

*The railway was all electric powered, providing clean transportation. Electric power was provided by five substations. Some of these substations still stand, including the Coghlan Station in Langley Township. The substations boosted power by supplying 600 volts of direct current to the trains via a system of poles and wires strung along the rail line. Each motorized interurban car had two single poles, one at each end providing power to the four 125 hp. electric motors.*

*The introduction of new roads and passenger vehicles made the rail service uneconomical. The B.C. Electric service ran until 1950, however long diesel-powered cargo trains continued to use the same tracks. The opening of the coal terminal at Roberts Bank in Tsawwassen increased rail traffic and created conflict with street traffic and pedestrians. The provincial government funded diverting the tracks around the City core to their current route. The original tracks from the Surrey border to Glover Road were torn up as part of the City's Revitalization Project during the early 1980s.*

A more detailed account of the Local Langley City Railway history, attachment A, will be found on the Langley City website, a QR code on the signs will direct the public to this site.

A template for the Railway Signs can be found in attachment B; the content and map will be updated with the information provided within this report.

There is a 2023 capital budget of \$5,000 to complete this project.

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The ARCH Committee would like to thank Mr. Bruce Downing for his research, passion, and untiring dedication to seeing this project implemented.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Councillor Rosemary Wallace  
Chair, Arts, Recreation, Culture and Heritage Committee

Attachment(s):

1. Neighbourhood History Timms
2. Template for Railway Signs