



MEDIA RELEASE

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BC Transit's new handyDART Centre in View Royal earns "Salmon Safe" certification

Vancouver and Victoria, BC— BC Transit's new handyDART Centre in View Royal, set to open in 2024, has been certified as Vancouver Island's first "Salmon Safe" site. The BC Transit site is being recognized for excellence in water conservation, stormwater management and restoration of a stream that runs into the salmon-bearing Craigflower Creek. Certification of the site was announced today by the non-profit Fraser Basin Council and its Salmon-Safe program, which recognizes progressive, environmentally friendly land and water management practices in BC.

"Salmon-Safe certification reflects exemplary stewardship of urban and agricultural lands," said Theresa Fresco, program manager with the Fraser Basin Council. "BC Transit has taken great care and leadership at the new handyDART centre to improve the ecology of a previously degraded industrial site, adopt sound water management practices and restore a stream and riparian areas."

"We've been working with local streamkeepers, nearby residents and local experts to ensure that we're enhancing the stream that runs through the site, which is currently the most significant environmental restoration project underway in the Craigflower Creek watershed," said BC Transit's Chief Sustainability Officer and VP of Asset Management Aaron Lamb. "This is a great example of how we can partner with the community to leave something in better shape than we found it through redevelopment."

Redevelopment of the property came with environmental challenges. When the Island Highway was built in the 1990s, a stream crossing the property and contributing to Craigflower Creek had previously been re-routed once or twice. Water flow was variable, and the riparian zone was overgrown with invasive plants. Under BC's Transit's development plan, the stream was realigned to the western and southern edge of the property to reconnect it to Craigflower Creek, and both the stream and streamside habitat were expanded and improved.

A Salmon-Safe expert assessment team visited the Handy DART construction site in March 2022. They reviewed BC Transit's environmental management plan, which includes extensive erosion

and sediment controls and water quality monitoring. **See backgrounder for the key factors that led to Salmon-Safe certification.**

About the Fraser Basin Council and Salmon-Safe BC

The [Fraser Basin Council](#) (FBC) is a non-profit organization that brings people together to advance sustainability in British Columbia. FBC manages the [Salmon-Safe BC](#) program to encourage and recognize land and water management practices in both urban and agricultural settings to better protect and restore Pacific salmon habitat and water quality. Salmon-Safe urban certification standards apply to variety of urban development landscapes, ranging from high-density urban infill to industrial parks. While the standards are designed as a standalone program, they can also complement other leading certification standards, such as LEED, Sustainable Sites, Envision, and Earth Advantage.

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BACKGROUND

Key factors that led to Salmon-Safe certification:

- Fill was removed from the site, and the realigned stream was designed to match the water flows that come from the upper watershed. A heritage alteration permit and heritage inspection permit safeguard identified archaeological sites.
- Nine new rain gardens covering 1/3 of an acre will retain run-off during rainstorms, and a storage detention tank and system will be installed for extreme storms. The tank will feature a valve, allowing emergency shutoff to the creek in the event of a spill.
- A new sediment trap at the top of the stream will remove sediment and pollutants running off the buildings and roads, providing cleaner water to Craigflower Creek. Water quality will be monitored, and data provided to local streamkeepers and agencies.
- Woodland habitat is being restored and expanded, and new aquatic habitat introduced, so stormwater will be cleaned, aerated, and slowly released into Craigflower Creek.
- The realigned stream has riffles and pools, as well as purposely placed rocks, logs and weirs that break up the water flow, introduce oxygen to the water and reduce stream bank erosion. The stream creates a new wildlife corridor connecting to the forest along Craigflower Creek.
- Trees are being replaced in a 2:1 ratio to enhance the landscape, including western red cedar and grand fir trees, and 8,000 native plants will provide shelter for birds and leaf litter for aquatic insects that, in turn, feed fish. Eagle View Elementary school students planted the first plants in the stream in [May 2022](#).
- The realigned stream connects back to Craigflower Creek through a gentle transition area to allow the new stream to access its floodplain during periods of high rainfall and provide new amphibian habitat and potential rearing habitat for Coho salmon and other juvenile fish.
- Conservation of potable water will also be addressed, through low-flow and low-flush plumbing fixtures in the new handyDART building, a water reclamation system for vehicle washing, and high-efficiency, limited irrigation system to help establish new plantings.

The Salmon-Safe certification of the site lasts five years and can be renewed.

Photos for sharing, including drone video: [Photos and videos linked here](#)