

Rail and Trail as Complementary Infrastructure: The Economic Case for a Parallel Bikeway in the Sea-to-Sky Passenger Rail Corridor

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Purpose

Global evidence from corridors with parallel rail and bikeway infrastructure consistently shows that rail and bikeway are mutually reinforcing: the trail generates passengers for the rail service, and the rail service amplifies the trail's economic output. This document presents that evidence as it applies to the proposed Sea-to-Sky passenger rail corridor (Vancouver–D'Arcy). It is intended as an input to the feasibility study, not a substitute for the economic modelling the study will undertake. It addresses three questions:

1. Would a parallel bikeway generate additional rail passengers?
2. Does rail service amplify the economic output of a trail corridor?
3. Given this mutually reinforcing relationship, how does the Sea-to-Sky corridor compare to trails with documented economic performance?

The evidence is drawn from rail-and-trail corridors in North America, Europe, Australasia, and East Asia where economic impact, ridership, and modal split have been measured. Sources are cited throughout; a full reference list with URLs is appended. All non-Canadian dollar figures include CAD conversions at April 2026 rates (USD/CAD 1.375; EUR/CAD 1.55; AUD/CAD 0.92; NZD/CAD 0.80). These conversions are used for cross-source comparability; they do not represent real-value equivalents for historical figures, which were earned and spent at different exchange rates and purchasing power levels. They are included so a Canadian reader can assess relative scale across sources without manual conversion, not to imply precision or purchasing-power equivalence.

1. A Parallel Bikeway Generates Rail Passengers

The central question for a rail feasibility study is whether the bikeway creates ridership that would not otherwise exist. The evidence from corridors where this has been measured says yes — through several mechanisms.

Trail improves catchment on both ends of a rail journey.

The cleanest argument for including both in the corridor design is the point-to-point itinerary: a local resident cycling into Squamish for errands can take the train home without waiting for a return departure that fits their schedule. A cyclist who wants to explore the full corridor without doubling back can train to one end and bike home, or bike out and train back. Each round trip is one rail ticket and one trail journey that neither infrastructure generates without the other.

The bikeway also improves corridor communities' non-car access to their nearest station. This is linear, not radial: the trail extends access along the corridor in both directions from each station rather than in all directions around it. People living or staying within a comfortable cycling distance of the trail — roughly 3–10 km depending on terrain and fitness — can reach a station without a car. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) finds that cycling access is "even more efficient" at expanding transit reach "in rural areas with poor transit service" (RTC 2019); corridor towns like D'Arcy and Mount Currie, currently car-dependent for station access, gain a safe, comfortable non-motorized option.

Passengers arriving by rail can also reach more from the station if they have a bike. Along the trail, this is linear — accessible in either direction from the station. In the destination town, it depends on local cycling infrastructure; where that exists, the radial catchment applies: cyclists cover approximately 3× the distance of walkers in the same time, so the accessible area expands by roughly 9× (area scales with the square of distance: $(3\times)^2 = 9\times$). This operates through two effects. First, it shifts modal choice: a traveller who knows they can get around at the destination is more likely to choose rail over driving with a car they'd need for local mobility. Second, it deepens trip value for those already using rail — the local resident who cycles to a store completes an errand they couldn't otherwise do car-free; the tourist who can reach the viewpoint or café from the station spends time and money they would have skipped on foot. The economic evidence in Section 2 — cycling visitors staying 45% longer and spending 28% more than non-cyclists — reflects in part this expanded destination range.

All three mechanisms work best when cyclists can bring their bikes on the train. Carrying a bike eliminates two friction points simultaneously: no bike left unsecured at the origin station, and a bike available at the destination without depending on rental availability. This is why rolling stock capacity matters as a planning consideration — the trail and rail reinforce each other most strongly when bikes travel freely between stations. A traveller without their own bike still benefits from these mechanisms if station-based rental exists at corridor stops; without rental and without their own bike, the egress and point-to-point benefits are significantly reduced. Station bike rental therefore amplifies the return on both the bikeway and rail investments simultaneously, at relatively low infrastructure cost.

Rail captured a growing share of a rapidly expanding market

The Loire à Vélo (France, 900 km) is a well-studied rail+trail corridor and a clear illustration of what sustained investment produces. The most concrete finding: by 2025, TER (Trains Express Régionaux — France's regional rail network) bike ridership in Pays de la Loire had grown 5× over ten years, outstripping capacity entirely — cyclists were being turned away from trains, and France's national rail operator (SNCF) introduced mandatory paid bike reservations from May 2026 to manage demand (Inddigo/Symétris 2024; SNCF TER Pays de la Loire 2026). The regional vice president for mobility acknowledged in December 2025 that bike-on-rail demand growth is permanent and structural (Collectif Vélo Pays-de-la-Loire 2025). This growth was not accidental: SNCF invested in purpose-built bike carriage (up to 50 spaces per InterLoire train, including a staffed 17-bike section for tandems and cargo bikes in summer).

The modal split data provides supporting context. Between 2015 and 2022, total cyclist volumes on the Loire roughly doubled, from approximately 900,000 to 1.8 million (ICI/France Bleu 2023; Inddigo/Symétris 2024). Rail captured the larger share of that growth: train arrivals rose from approximately 350,000 to 790,000, while car arrivals grew more modestly from approximately 405,000 to 630,000 — shifting the modal split from car-majority (45% car, 39% train) to train-majority (35% car, 44% train). The study design does not allow the trail effect to be isolated from concurrent changes in accommodation supply or regional tourism marketing, and the 2015–2022 period coincides with a continent-wide post-COVID surge in active transportation that independently pushed modal splits toward cycling and rail. The economic output from the same period is presented in Section 2.

Trail demand may create rail ridership

Missouri's Katy Trail (386 km) and the Amtrak Missouri River Runner suggest a further mechanism: the trail may generate rail trips that would not happen at all without it.

Station-level data is illustrative rather than conclusive. Hermann, Missouri — population approximately 2,400 — generated 26,037 annual Amtrak boardings and alightings in fiscal year 2018, the most recent year with publicly available station-level data. Wine tourism and cycling are both draws, and available data does not isolate one from the other. But the per-capita volume itself is the point: a town this small does not generate that level of rail demand from residential travel. What the data establishes — regardless of the mix of visitor types — is that a small town without car rental infrastructure generates substantial rail demand when there are compelling reasons to visit without a car. The stronger institutional evidence is Amtrak's own behaviour: Amtrak and Missouri State Parks jointly operate a "Bike Katy, Ride Amtrak" co-marketing program targeting cyclists specifically, and Missouri has been cited in Amtrak research as having disproportionately high bike-on-train usage for its population (MoBikeFed). An operator does not build a co-marketing program around a corridor if it isn't seeing ridership from it. The same structural conditions — small rural communities, no car rental, compelling reasons to visit without a car — describe D'Arcy, Mount Currie, and Pemberton.

The demand pattern is continental, not anecdotal

European operators tracked by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) report consistent, large-scale growth. Belgium's national rail operator (NMBS/SNCB) carried 251,000 bicycles in 2019 and 451,800 in 2023 — an 80% increase. Deutsche Bahn grew from 393,500 in 2019 to 600,000 in 2024 (+52%). Luxembourg Railways (CFL) grew from 247,898 in 2023 to 270,620 in 2024 (+9%). Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) recorded 305,770 bicycle day-pass sales in 2019, rising to 392,809 in 2024 (+28.5%) (ECF, Cyclists Love Trains 2025; ECF HSR Policy Brief 2025). These are not niche volumes. The Active2PublicTransport (A2PT) survey of 5,053 cycling tourists across the Danube corridor (2024) found that 53% used railways to reach their holiday destination and 67% used public transport during their trip. When asked what determines where they choose to cycle, "the possibility of carrying bicycles on public transport" ranked second, behind only infrastructure quality (A2PT 2024).

BC's cycling tourism market is less mature than Europe's, and these volumes are not near-term projections for the Sea-to-Sky corridor. They are evidence of where cycling-rail demand goes as markets develop.

Evidence limitations

No study identified in this research quantifies "Trail X was built → Station Y ridership increased by Z%." The Loire modal split is the closest, but the 2015–2022 comparison spans COVID, which disrupted car travel and accelerated cycling adoption across Europe; the study does not isolate the contribution of rail integration from broader trend effects. The Katy evidence is strong but circumstantial — the trail predates available station-level data, so no before-and-after exists. The rural catchment multiplier is well-established transit research applied to a new context, not a measured outcome on a cycling corridor. The reverse direction — whether rail service amplifies trail economic output — is addressed in the following section.

2. Rail Service Amplifies the Trail's Economic Output

The relationship is mutually reinforcing. Point 1 showed that the bikeway generates rail passengers. This section presents evidence that the availability of rail return transport amplifies trail usage and economic impact — sometimes dramatically.

Rail unlocks the highest-value visitor segment

Across every trail corridor where overnight spending has been measured, a consistent pattern emerges: overnight visitors generate disproportionate economic value, and point-to-point rail return is one factor that makes overnight trips feasible for many riders.

On the Erie Canalway Trail (New York), overnight visitors represent only 18% of visits but account for 84% of total spending — a ratio that exceeds comparable corridors reviewed in this research (Headwaters Economics 2014). The trail is served by Amtrak's Empire Service at 9 stations along the corridor (Albany-Rensselaer to Buffalo-Exchange St.), enabling the point-to-point multi-day trips that overnight visitors take (Canalway Trail Times 2026).

Incomplete integration leaves value on the table

Two corridors illustrate what happens when the rail-and-trail relationship is only half-built.

On the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP, Pennsylvania–Maryland), the trail exists but rail capacity is insufficient. Amtrak's Floridian (formerly the Capitol Limited) carries a maximum of 6 bicycles per train, with one train per day in each direction (GAP Conservancy). Bike spaces sell out months in advance. An entire private shuttle industry (at least seven operators) exists specifically because the train cannot meet demand — both in capacity (6 bikes per train) and in scheduling (arrivals and departures at the endpoints fall in the middle of the night). Suppressed demand for return transport is, by definition, suppressed trail use and suppressed economic impact.

Quebec's Train de Charlevoix illustrates the reverse: rail exists but cycling integration was not pursued. The scenic railway (Quebec City to La Malbaie, ~140 km along the St. Lawrence) was revived at a cost of C\$18.4M. It runs through spectacular coastal scenery along a corridor with strong cycling tourism potential. A C\$27M proposal for a 14.3 km cycling path near Baie-Saint-Paul and Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive — one section of the broader corridor, not a full parallel bikeway — was rejected in early 2025 (La Presse, January 2025; Le Soleil, March 2025). No parallel cycling route exists on the corridor. Rail tourism revenue is being captured, but cycling tourism spending — the higher-value visitor segment — is not. The Charlevoix coast is structurally similar to the Sea-to-Sky corridor in scenic character, and the absence of cycling integration is likely leaving economic value unrealized.

The economic growth trajectory with rail integration

Returning to the Loire à Vélo — this time for economic rather than modal data. Between 2015 and 2022, alongside the integration of rail service, the corridor's cycling volumes doubled (to 1.8 million cyclists) and economic impact grew from €29.6M (CAD \$45.9M) to €54.5M (CAD \$84.5M), an 84% increase. This translates to approximately €60,000 (CAD \$93,000) per kilometre per year in economic return. The 2022 study also found that 31% of itinerant cyclists were on their first-ever multi-day cycling trip — suggesting the trail is functioning as an entry point to the market, not just serving existing demand; though first-timers may spend less than experienced cycle tourists (Inddigo/Symétris 2024).

The Murray to Mountains Rail Trail (Victoria, Australia) generates AUD \$21.45M (CAD \$19.7M) annually, distributed across small regional towns that had no prior tourism base — illustrating

the community distribution pattern documented across comparable corridors (Deloitte 2003–2006).

3. The Sea-to-Sky Corridor in Comparable Context

The economic case depends on how the corridor is configured. Two scenarios are considered: a base case (Squamish to D'Arcy, ~130 km) and an extended case (Park Royal in West Vancouver to D'Arcy, ~185 km). The difference is not incremental — it changes which global comparables apply. The figures that follow are benchmarks from comparable corridors at market maturity, not projections for this one. This document provides the inputs for that modelling, not the modelling itself.

Base case: Squamish–D'Arcy (~130 km)

In this scenario, the trailhead is in Squamish, approximately one hour from Vancouver by car or bus. Metro Vancouver's 3M+ residents are the primary catchment, but transport friction exists — riders must drive, bus, or be shuttled to the start.

Three comparables calibrate this scenario.

The Kettle Valley Rail Trail (KVR, Penticton–Kelowna, ~80 km) is the floor. Same province, similar rail-conversion model, regional catchment. The KVR generates CAD \$24M in annual economic impact from 107,000+ annual trips (TOTA/Symphony 2024–25). The Squamish–D'Arcy corridor is better positioned: Whistler is a stronger midpoint anchor than any Okanagan town, and Vancouver's catchment is larger than the Okanagan's even with the transport friction. If the KVR produces \$24M, this corridor is structurally positioned to exceed it — though that outcome depends on accommodation development, marketing investment, and trail quality that the KVR has built over years of operation.

The P'tit Train du Nord (Quebec, 200 km) is the best structural match. A linear rail-conversion trail, a resort at the midpoint (Mont-Tremblant, though smaller than Whistler), a large metro catchment with transport friction to the trailhead (Montreal, ~1.5 hours by car). The P'tit Train generates CAD \$68M in economic returns with ~2M passages and 815 jobs (BC2 2023). This is what the base case could approach at maturity — noting that Quebec has 30 years of provincial cycling coordination behind that number.

New Zealand's Alps 2 Ocean (A2O, 316 km) illustrates the per-visitor spending a premium corridor can reach at market maturity. It draws 40% international visitors and CAD \$1,527 per person — roughly double the New Zealand all-trails average (NZCT 2025). That premium reflects 17 years of national cycling tourism investment, established international marketing, and New Zealand's position as a bucket-list cycling destination. The Sea-to-Sky corridor has structural advantages — international name recognition (Whistler, the Sea-to-Sky Highway) and

direct access from Vancouver International Airport (YVR) — but reaching A2O-level per-visitor spending would require sustained provincial investment in trail infrastructure, accommodation networks, and international cycling tourism marketing over at least a decade. A2O is an aspirational long-run benchmark, not a near-term projection.

BC-specific evidence from the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail finds touring couples spending CAD \$150–400 per night on lodging and CAD \$60–120 per day on meals, with the upper end reflecting comfort-tier riders on B&B itineraries (Schoen 2025). For multi-day visitors, per-trip spending per touring couple would reasonably fall in the range of CAD \$1,000–\$1,400.

Northern service infrastructure (Mount Currie, D'Arcy) is below all comparables at opening. This is standard for rail trails and typically addressable within the first decade of operation, based on comparable corridor experience. The pattern documented across comparable corridors — from the GAP's Trail Town Program to the Maniototo region along New Zealand's Otago Central Rail Trail — is consistent: small rural communities transform as trail-driven visitor demand becomes visible to operators.

Extended case: Park Royal–D'Arcy (~185 km)

If a separated bikeway extends from Squamish to Park Royal in West Vancouver — roughly a 20-minute ride from downtown Vancouver on existing cycling infrastructure — the transport friction to the trailhead effectively disappears. The corridor becomes directly rideable from a metro area of 3M+ residents. This changes which global comparables apply.

The Park Royal–Squamish section adds a dimension that elevates the corridor from attractive to exceptional: the rail alignment traces the Howe Sound waterfront through coastal mountain scenery that has no equivalent on the base case route. Canadian Cycling Magazine has described the GranFondo route along this corridor as a "world-class riding experience" (Canadian Cycling Magazine 2024). The extended corridor would combine four conditions that rarely co-occur on a single trail: length sufficient for multi-day touring, scenic quality that already draws international attention, proximity to a major North American metro, and a separated flat rail-grade surface. This combination is relevant to the comparables that follow — the trails that generate the largest economic returns in the literature tend to share several of these characteristics.

The Great Allegheny Passage (Pittsburgh–Cumberland, 241 km) becomes the primary North American comparable. The trailhead is at Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh — riders begin from the city centre, as they would from Park Royal. Pittsburgh metro is 2.3M (vs. Vancouver 3M+). The GAP generates USD \$121M (CAD \$166M) in annual economic impact, measured by a trail-specific visitor spending survey (Fourth Economy 2019). The GAP connects via the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Towpath (C&O) to Washington, DC (metro 6M+), giving the combined corridor a catchment population and visitor draw that far exceeds either endpoint alone. The C&O's National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Spending Effects study (2024) estimates

USD \$144M (CAD \$198M) in economic impact from the canal park — but that figure uses a different methodology (park-wide spending model, all visitor types), covers a different year, and cannot be added to the GAP figure to produce a combined total. Together they illustrate direction and scale: a metro-accessible corridor with strong anchor endpoints generates economic impact in the hundreds of millions. In practice the two trails function as one 540 km corridor: cyclists routinely ride both, with options (Amtrak, shuttle, one-way car rental) for one-way itineraries. The BC corridor does not have an equivalent second metro at its far end — D'Arcy is a rural terminus. The GAP is therefore an aspirational comparable, but the direction is clear: a directly metro-accessible trail of this length generates impact at a different scale than one requiring a car or bus to reach.

The P'tit Train du Nord shifts from structural match to floor. The extended BC corridor is better positioned on several structural variables — larger metro catchment, direct rideable connection from the city (vs. driving from Montreal), international airport access, and Whistler as a stronger midpoint anchor than Mont-Tremblant. If the P'tit Train generates \$68M, the extended case is positioned to exceed it at maturity — though that outcome depends on comparable levels of provincial coordination and accommodation investment over a similar time horizon.

The Danube Cycle Path (Austrian section) and Loire à Vélo provide trajectory evidence for what happens as a market matures. The Danube's Austrian section — Vienna through the UNESCO Wachau Valley to Passau, with Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) stations every ~5 km — is the closest global structural match: metro anchor, world-class scenic valley, rail integration, progressively rural. The German Danube section alone draws 600,000+ riders per year (ADFC 2024). German cycling tourists on the Danube spend an average of €117/day (CAD \$181/day): a benchmark for what per-visitor daily spending looks like on a mature European rail-and-trail corridor (ADFC 2024). The Danube sits inside a continental cycling tourism market that is substantially more mature than BC's: the A2PT survey found 53% of cycling tourists already use rail, and the addressable population within a few hours by train runs into the tens of millions across central Europe. Those volumes are not near-term projections for BC. They are evidence of the long-term ceiling for a metro-anchored scenic corridor with full rail integration, in a jurisdiction that invests in cycling tourism over decades.

Observed demand for the extended corridor

The RBC GranFondo Whistler is consistently ranked among North America's top GranFondos, having taken the top spot in multiple recent years (Endurance Sportswire 2025). Thousands of international cyclists pay to ride the Park Royal–Whistler corridor one day per year — the only traffic-free window available to them. This is evidence that the corridor already commands international cycling appeal. A separated path on the adjacent rail alignment would extend that appeal to a far broader audience: families, older riders, e-bike users, and multi-day tourists for whom a competitive road event is inaccessible. The GranFondo and the proposed bikeway serve distinct market segments, but both confirm the corridor's scenic credentials and its draw for cyclists willing to travel internationally.

Network maturation: the long-term ceiling

Per-trail figures understate the long-term case. Two jurisdictions with population comparable to BC illustrate what cycling tourism produces at network scale.

New Zealand's 23 Great Rides generated CAD \$1.02B in visitor spending for the year ending June 2025, up 35% from 2021 (NZCT 2025). After 17 years of network development, cycling tourism now exceeds the economic value of New Zealand's cruise tourism and Māori tourism sectors. Quebec's cycling tourism generated CAD \$803M in tourism spending in 2024, supporting nearly 6,400 jobs and contributing CAD \$467M to provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP), after 30 years of coordination by Vélo Québec (Vélo Québec 2024).

A single corridor will not produce these outcomes in isolation. But a flagship corridor investment paired with provincial coordination could put them within reach on a 15–20 year horizon.

4. Planning Considerations

The following considerations arise from the evidence reviewed in this document. They are offered as inputs to the feasibility study's scope, not as prescriptive recommendations.

Bike capacity in rolling stock. Every successful international model uses some form of in-carriage or roll-on bike storage. Where bike capacity is limited — as on Amtrak's Floridian serving the GAP corridor (6 bikes per train, one train per day, nighttime scheduling) — a private shuttle industry develops to fill the gap, and demand for both rail and trail is suppressed. European Union (EU) experience is instructive: Latvian national operator VIVI entered new rolling stock into service without bike spaces, faced public backlash, and was forced to retrofit 12 bicycle spaces at a cost of €948,000 (CAD \$1.47M) — of which €806,000 was EU-financed (ECF HSR Policy Brief 2025). The EU now legally requires a minimum of 4 bicycle spaces on all new rolling stock (Regulation 2021/782, effective June 2025); France and Belgium mandate 8. Addressing bike capacity at the procurement stage avoids both retrofit costs and the loss of cycling-generated ridership.

Bikeway integration at design stage. The EU's revised Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation (adopted April 2024) now requires all new transport infrastructure projects to incorporate active mobility infrastructure, based on decades of evidence that retrofitting cycling into completed projects is more expensive and less effective than designing it in from the start (ECF TEN-T guidance 2024). A bikeway built alongside the rail line from the outset follows the rail-with-trail model — an established and growing practice. As of 2018 (the most recent comprehensive survey at the time of the 2021 report), there were 343 rails-with-trails in the United States totalling 917 miles in 47 states, up 5× from 2002 (FHWA/FRA 2021). Federal

design guidance covering setback, separation, crossings, station access, and bike parking is available (FHWA/FRA 2021).

Station design for cycling access. Secure bicycle parking at stations, safe cycling routes to stations, and platform accessibility with bicycles are standard elements in both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rail-with-trail guidance and the EU's TEN-T implementation framework. The ECF recommends a minimum cycling catchment of 4 km (a 15-minute ride) for station access planning (ECF TEN-T guidance 2024). For the northern corridor stations (Pemberton, D'Arcy), cycling catchment is one mechanism for expanding ridership from dispersed rural populations.

Co-marketing and institutional coordination. The Katy Trail's "Bike Katy, Ride Amtrak" partnership, New Zealand's Rail Cycle Escapes product, and Oregon's Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway (where the state Department of Transportation (DOT) designed the cycling route around existing Amtrak Cascades service) all demonstrate that rail-and-trail economic synergies require active co-marketing, not just compatible infrastructure. The feasibility study may wish to identify the institutional mechanism for this coordination.

5. Additional Considerations

This document has focused narrowly on the economic synergies between a parallel bikeway and passenger rail service — the evidence that each generates demand for the other. This is not the full case for the bikeway. The following section steps outside the evidential scope of Sections 1–4 to flag four dimensions the feasibility study should examine but that this document does not model. These are not neutral scoping notes — they identify additional arguments for the bikeway that fall beyond the rail-and-trail interaction evidence reviewed above.

First Nations connections. The bikeway corridor crosses the traditional territories of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish Nation), Líl'wat7úl (Lil'wat Nation), and N'Quatqua First Nation. The two primary commercial stops at the rural end of the corridor — the Lil'wat-operated store at Mount Currie and the N'Quatqua-operated gas station, store, and post office at D'Arcy — are already Indigenous-owned. The January 2026 letter to the Prime Minister and Premier on corridor preservation was co-signed by four First Nations. The non-motorized corridor dimension may carry cultural significance beyond tourism and access. Elder Ruth Adams of the Tsawwassen First Nation — whose territory lies at the southern end of the broader Salish Sea watershed — has described her community's trail restoration project in these terms: "There was a time many years ago when our ancestors travelled the Salish territory on a trail that connected all our communities. Our connections run as deep as our roots. The message I received was to create and re-build a path that our ancestors once walked on together" (BC Assembly of First Nations, 2025). Whether Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, Líl'wat7úl, and N'Quatqua see the Sea-to-Sky bikeway corridor in similar terms is a question for them to answer. Their perspectives on the non-motorized corridor dimension warrant direct engagement as part of the feasibility process.

The partnership, governance, and economic participation dimensions of First Nations involvement warrant dedicated treatment.

Rural economic development. The bikeway creates visitor demand that enables small communities along the corridor — particularly Mount Currie and D'Arcy — to build tourism economies at a scale they cannot currently reach. The evidence from comparable corridors (the GAP's Trail Town Program, New Zealand's Maniototo region) consistently shows that small rural communities transform as trail-driven visitor demand becomes visible to operators. Cycling visitors are also measurably higher-value than average tourists: Statistics Canada's National Travel Survey finds cycling visitors to Ontario spend \$537 per trip compared to \$421 for non-cyclists — a 28% premium — and stay 45% longer (4.2 nights vs. 2.9 nights) (Statistics Canada, National Travel Survey 2022). The pattern holds internationally, with Italy reporting a 59% daily spending premium for bicycle tourists (ISNART 2024), France 24%, and Quebec 26% (Vélo Québec). These are visitors the rail service alone does not attract.

Shoulder season and demographic diversification. The multi-day cycle tourist demographic — 45–65+, 47% retired, 61% with household income over \$100K — fills hotel rooms mid-week in September, not weekend nights in August (Ontario By Bike 2025). Research consistently finds cycle tourists actively prefer cooler temperatures, uncrowded trails, and lower accommodation prices. A bikeway accesses this market without competing with the corridor's existing adventure and ski tourism for the same infrastructure or season. Rail passengers and cyclists together extend the corridor's productive tourism season beyond what either delivers alone.

Emergency access and corridor resilience. Highway 99 is the sole road access to corridor communities. A bikeway built to a width and grade that accommodates emergency vehicles provides a second access corridor when the highway is closed. The Sea to Sky Multimodal Evacuation Plan (2019) already identifies the Whistler Valley Trail as an alternate emergency access and egress route. This resilience value is independent of the cycling tourism case.

Conclusion

The economic evidence alone supports including a parallel bikeway in the corridor design. The bikeway generates rail passengers the service would not otherwise have. Rail service amplifies the trail's economic output. The corridor is structurally positioned — by catchment, scenery, and anchor — to perform at or above comparable trail corridors at similar levels of maturity — corridors that generate tens to hundreds of millions of dollars in annual economic impact. These synergies are strongest when both infrastructure elements are designed together from the feasibility stage, and when bike capacity is addressed in rolling stock procurement rather than retrofitted after service begins.

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