

Victoria to Saanich Cable Replacement Project – Investigative Works Report #1

August 2026

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Background: Greater Victoria Transmission

Installed in 1976, the current 230-kilovolt power line that runs 7.4 km from the Goward Substation to Horsey Substation is a key part of Greater Victoria's electricity system – being one of four circuits currently serving approximately 140,000 customers.

Construction on the Victoria to Esquimalt Cable Replacement Project began in early 2025 and is planned to be in-service in fall 2026. The project will improve reliability, strengthen system resilience and ensure the electricity network can continue to safely meet the needs of a growing region. More information on the project is www.bchydro.com/victoriatoesquimalt.

A new transmission line was put in place between the George Tripp Substation and the Horsey Substation in 2016.



- 1: Victoria to Esquimalt Cable Replacement Project
- 2: Victoria to Saanich Cable Replacement Project

Background: Victoria to Saanich Cable Replacement Project

The Victoria to Saanich transmission line is regularly monitored, maintained and is critical to the electricity supply for Greater Victoria. This circuit is nearing end of life and requires replacement. The project is planning to replace the direct buried transmission cable and provide the following benefits:

- Reliability
- Capacity
- Seismic Resiliency
- Environment

Cross section of an XLPE (no oil) cable that will be used versus the existing oil-filled cable (right).

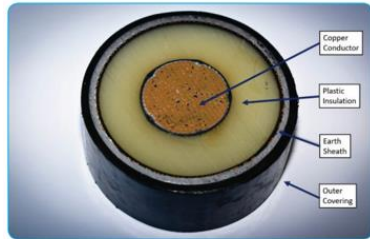
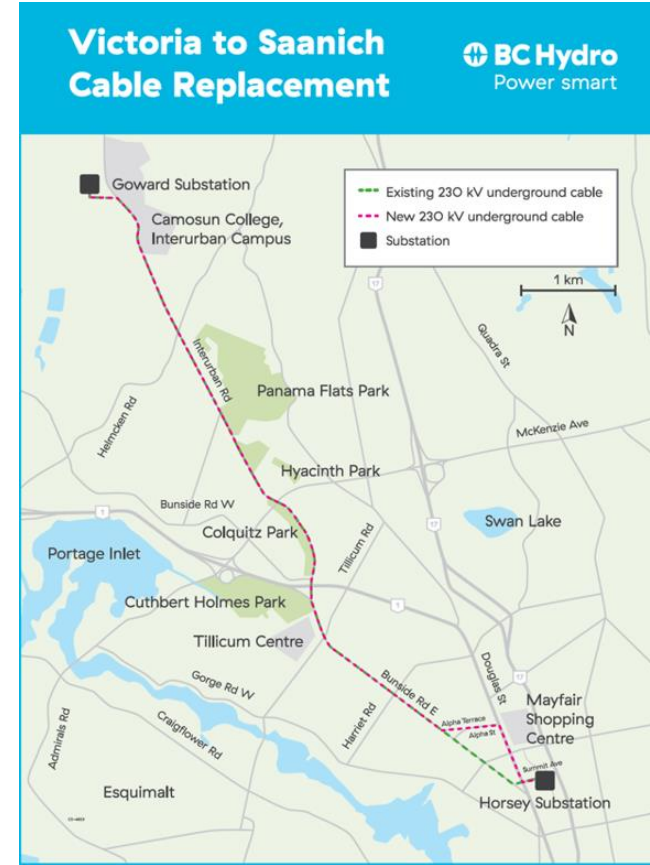
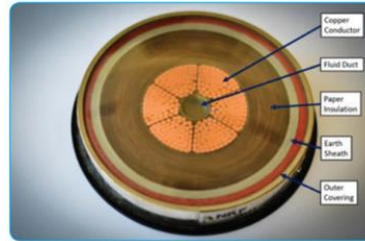


Figure 4 Modern 220 kV XLPE Plastic Cable



Project status

- Investigative work – started August 4 and up to three months of work to confirm duct bank and concrete vault design.
 - Traffic management plans reviewed and approved by District of Saanich and City of Victoria.
 - Media notice issued. Two media examples posted below:
 - CHEK News: BC Hydro to begin investigative work ahead of Victoria-Saanich cable replacement
<https://cheknews.ca/bc-hydro-to-begin-investigative-work-ahead-of-victoria-saanich-cable-replacement-1337839/>
 - Victoria Times Colonist: Disruptions on Interurban, Burnside coming for B.C. Hydro work
<https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/disruptions-on-interurban-burnside-coming-for-bc-hydro-work-12582215>
- As of August, 30 test locations have been completed, with about 67 test locations remaining along the 7.4 km route. Additional investigation locations may be added as engineering progresses and further design information becomes available.
- Project community open houses (3) and a virtual open house will be held in fall 2026 and more will be held in spring 2027. Dates for the fall 2026 open houses will be provided in the next report and posted on the project web page.
- Project construction: as early as late summer 2027.



Project investigative work status

The approximate schedule, subject to change:

- Interurban Road – Camosun College thru Wilkinson Intersection: Complete except for two drill hole locations to be done at night.
- Interurban Road – Wilkinson Intersection to Marigold Road: Complete except for remaining drill hole locations requiring night work.
- Interurban Road – Marigold Road thru Colquitz Park: Early September.
- Burnside Road – Tillicum Road intersection: Mid-September.
- Burnside Road – Tillicum Road intersection to Washington Ave: Late September.
- Alpha Terrace and Alpha Street: October.
- Douglas Street: October.



August 26: Investigate work taking place at night at the Interurban Road and Wilkinson Road intersection.



Project investigative work – why and the benefit

This work will help finalize the design and placement of the new underground cable system ahead of construction. Crews doing the investigative works, also known as daylighting, will remove small sections of asphalt, use equipment to safely locate underground utilities and assess ground conditions, then restore the work areas once investigations are complete.

Information gathered during the investigations will help confirm underground conditions and reduce the risk of construction delays when the cable replacement project moves forward. Reducing the risk of underground surprises during project construction will lead to less delays and redesigns, keep costs in line, and reduce impacts to the community with less presence on city streets.

BC Hydro has worked closely with the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich to develop traffic management plans and minimize disruptions. Some work is taking place at night to reduce impacts on traffic. Generally, the work is being done from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm to avoid morning and late afternoon commuters. More than 100 locations along the route will be investigated.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 5: Traffic management with single-lane alternating traffic and the confirmation of the depth of a sewer line.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 11: The existing street vaults along the route are 2.4 metres, by 2.7 metres, and 6 metres long. These vaults are where the existing cables are spliced together to make one long 7.4 km transmission line. Here, the four corners of the vault are shown with the orange ellipses. This work helps confirm the location and dimensions of existing infrastructure.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 11: H-Vac trucks have been used for the investigative work. Soils are dislodged by high-pressure water and then vacuumed into the truck. This process prevents damage to underground utilities. Crews are confirming the corner of the concrete cable vault shown on the previous page. We coordinated the work activities with BC Transit thru bi-weekly meetings.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 11: Crews cutting the asphalt and then prying it up to investigate the depth of a storm drain. The portable vacuum was there to remove water used by the saw.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 17: Crews removing material to expose an underground utility. This work is done to verify horizontal and vertical clearances as generally the new cables must be 1 metre away from other utilities. Information collected during daylighting helps reduce construction risk and supports final design development. Interurban and Wilkinson intersection is in the background.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 17: Crews cutting and removing asphalt to expose and confirm the limits of an existing transmission cable vault.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 17: Two layers of asphalt were at this location with an excavator used to remove the second layer.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 17: Site presence along Interurban Road and the single-lane alternating traffic between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 17: Moving down Interurban Road and road cutting to investigate a sewer line.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 17: Engineers reviewing plans and drawings. The new cable will require a construction trench about 2.5 metres deep and wide. The new concrete vaults, for the larger cable, are about 4 metres wide and deep, and 12 metres long.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 19: More underground utility exposures and back-filling. The two areas were about to be restored with asphalt placement.



Construction photos: Interurban Road

August 19: Sign-boards are placed on both sides of the work area for public awareness and contact. Letters were also hand-delivered to businesses and residents around the Interurban Road and Wilkinson Road intersection about the night work.



Traffic Management: Interurban/Wilkinson

Traffic management plan during the August 24, 25 and 26 investigative work that went thru the Interurban Road and Wilkinson Road intersection.

The narrow investigative trench was up to 2 metres deep. The work was done over three nights from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am. Work just off the intersection, also at night, is planned for August 31 and September 1. There were no road closures and numerous flaggers efficiently direct traffic from the five roads that feed into the intersection.

Please obey traffic control personnel.

The many utilities under the intersection were mapped and documented.



Construction photos: Interurban/Wilkinson

August 26: Removing soils within the investigation trench with the surrounding traffic management.



Construction photos: Interurban/Wilkinson

August 26: Setting up lighting for traffic control staff to manage the five roads and alternating one road at a time thru the intersection.



Construction photos: Interurban/Wilkinson

August 26: H-Vac crews exposing underground utilities. Half the intersection was completed and repaved the night of August 25.



Construction photos: Interurban/Wilkinson

August 26: Work area with Interurban Road in the background and Wilkinson Road on the right.



Construction photos: Interurban/Wilkinson

August 26: Panoramic view of the intersection work and the traffic management.



Construction photos: Interurban/Wilkinson

August 26: Crews working into the night.

