

William R. Bennett Bridge



“The new toll-free bridge is going to improve safety, while reducing traffic congestion in Kelowna and on the west side. This agreement provides good value to taxpayers. Over the 30-year contract, government will save over \$25 million in construction, financing, maintenance and rehabilitation costs than if the bridge was delivered by traditional means.”

– Kevin Falcon, former Minister of Transportation

Project Overview

The existing 3-lane Okanagan Lake Bridge, completed in 1958, was one of the few floating bridges in North America. It was operating well over its capacity and had become one of the most congested stretches of highway in the Interior of British Columbia. With an average daily traffic in the summer months exceeding 50,000 vehicles per day, the existing bridge was in an advanced state of deterioration and beyond repair.

The new, five-lane William R. Bennett Bridge replaced the existing bridge and formed part of Highway 97, crossing Okanagan Lake between Kelowna and Westbank.

This new \$144 million bridge was required to relieve congestion on the highway and make the route safer and more efficient for drivers. In addition, both the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the City of Kelowna upgraded the east and west approaches to the bridge to improve traffic flow.

The final agreement will deliver a new Okanagan Lake bridge service that will:

- Satisfy immediate and medium-term traffic demand,
- Achieve value for money for taxpayers,
- Improve and ensure long-term safety on the crossing,

- Ensure the existing bridge serves traffic demand during construction of new service, and
- Ensure the usable 75-year design life of the new bridge is secured by way of the optimized turn-over condition commitment.

Partnership Highlights

The William R. Bennett Bridge will be designed, built, financed and operated by SNC-Lavalin Inc., a leading engineering and construction company. This public private partnership benefits from private sector knowledge and expertise, resulting in a lower cost to taxpayers, and value for money contract for taxpayers.

Under the contract, SNC-Lavalin will:

- Finance, design, construct, operate, maintain and rehabilitate the new bridge and decommission the existing bridge;
- Deliver transportation infrastructure in a timely manner;
- Deliver the bridge back to the Province at the end of the 30-year agreement in acceptable turn-over conditions; and

- Assume the majority of risks for a very technically challenging piece of transportation infrastructure.

Expected Benefits

- The partnership agreement with SNC-Lavalin will cost the public sector approximately \$170 million over the 30-year contract period. This compares favourably to the Province's estimate of \$195 million had they built it alone. This represents life cycle savings of approximately \$25 million.
- As a fixed-price contract, risk for cost overruns is held by SNC-Lavalin rather than B.C. taxpayers.
- As a performance-based contract, incentives are in place for the operator to meet or exceed long-term safety, reliability and capacity objectives set by the Province.
- Further incentives were included to minimize road delays and closures, improve predictability and complete the bridge on time.

Public Sector Partners

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- The British Columbia Transport Finance Authority

Private Sector Partners

Okanagan Lake Concession Limited Partner

- SNC-Lavalin Constructors (Pacific) Inc.
- Vancouver Pile Driving Ltd.
- SNC-Lavalin ProFac
- Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada
- Ontario Teacher's Pension Plan Board

Partnerships BC's Role

Partnerships BC acted as the business adviser and procurement manager for this project.