

Pitt River Bridge & Mary Hill Interchange Project

Information Update

February 2006

The Pitt River Bridge and Mary Hill Interchange Project

The Pitt River Bridge and Mary Hill Interchange Project includes a new bridge to replace the existing swing bridges and an interchange to replace the existing Lougheed Highway and Mary Hill Bypass intersection. The project is a stand-alone component of the North Fraser Perimeter Road Project (NFPR), which is part of the larger Gateway Program. The Ministry of Transportation established the Gateway Program in response to the impact of growing congestion in Greater Vancouver, and to improve the movement of people, goods and transit throughout the region.

The new Pitt River Bridge will have six through lanes and an auxiliary truck lane in the eastbound direction. The bridge foundation will be designed to support additional width for potential future light rail transit. It will also provide up to 16 meters of marine clearance over a 100-meter-wide shipping channel in the Pitt River, as well as facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

The existing intersection at Lougheed Highway and Mary Hill Bypass will be replaced with a grade-separated interchange with on and off ramps that would allow for free-flow of traffic. It will also provide for future connection to the Fremont Extension, to support development in Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam. Combined with the new bridge, these improvements will allow for the elimination of the current counterflow system. This Project is scheduled to be completed by 2009 and will help address increasing congestion in growing Northeast Sector communities as well as address future traffic demands forecast to 2031

Need for a New Crossing

Existing facilities are heavily congested during peak travel periods and traffic volumes are projected to continue increasing. Movements over the Pitt River swing bridges have nearly tripled from 27,000 in 1985 to 78,000 in 2003, and are expected to reach 88,000 by 2007. Completion of TransLink's Golden Ears Bridge in 2009 and the accompanying changes in traffic patterns in the Northeast Sector are anticipated to significantly add to congestion at the Pitt River. Peak hour traffic in the already strained single lane direction of the bridges' counter-flow system is expected to increase by 20 to 30% once the Golden Ears Bridge opens.

The Goals for the Pitt River Bridge and Mary Hill Interchange Project:

- Improve reliability of the Pitt River Crossing for vehicle and marine traffic;
- Provide capacity to serve the needs of growing municipalities; and
- Improve safety along a key goods movement and commuting corridor.

The Project's technical features include:

- The new Pitt River Bridge will have six through lanes, and an auxiliary truck lane in the eastbound direction. The bridge foundation will also be designed to accommodate additional width in the future for potential light rail transit.
- The height of the new bridge will provide up to 16 metres of clearance over a 100-metre-wide shipping channel in the Pitt River.
- The bridge will have bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- The bridge and interchange design will meet the requirements of projected demand through to 2031.
- The bridge and interchange will accommodate municipal plans to build the Fremont extension, supporting future development to the north in Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam.
- Following construction of the new bridge, the existing swing bridges will be removed.

Key Benefits of the Pitt River Bridge and Mary Hill Interchange

The new fixed bridge and interchange are intended to create lasting improvements that provide benefits to the movements of people, goods and transit. These principal features include:

- **Reliability** - The removal of the existing swing bridges will help ensure a constant, free flow of traffic over the Pitt River. This will also allow more reliable transit times, enhancing transit's attractiveness as a transportation option. The new bridge will also ensure the free flow of marine traffic in the Pitt River.
- **Environmental Quality** - The project will require the removal of 18 piers currently supporting the existing structure, reducing their number to between three and five, enhancing environmental and aesthetic quality for the river and bank. The removal of the existing structures also allows for the rehabilitation of the land underneath and alongside these bridges.
- **Mobility** - The new bridge reduces congestion and eliminates backups caused by the current counter-flow system. It will also improve opportunities for the movement of passenger vehicles, trucks and transit, as well as for cyclists and pedestrians through dedicated facilities. Eliminating the complex, signalized Mary Hill intersection and replacing it with an interchange will also improve the movement of people, goods and transit.
- **Flexibility** - The new bridge will have the flexibility to adapt to different lane allocations. The bridge's lanes can be allocated for general-purpose or, in future, a combination of general-purpose and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. The bridge foundation will be designed to support additional width for potential future light rail transit.
- **Safety** - The new bridge and interchange will increase safety as a result of higher design standards, the elimination of a major intersection, and the provision of a dedicated pedestrian and cyclist pathway on the bridge. The new bridge also enhances safety for marine navigation.

For Further Information:

info@gatewayprogram.bc.ca

www.gatewayprogram.bc.ca

Project Completion

Given its strategic location at the heart of the Lower Mainland's northeast sector, the Pitt River Bridge is a critical component of the region's transportation network. Subject to environmental assessment certification, construction could begin as early as late 2006, with substantial completion in 2009, concurrent with opening of TransLink's Golden Ears Bridge.

The project will be built through a Design/Build contract. This process involves issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify companies capable of undertaking the project. Following the RFQ, a Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to those companies identified as being most capable of undertaking the project.

The Ministry of Transportation will be issuing the RFQ on February 22, 2006.

As part of its recent Pacific Gateway Initiative, the Government of Canada announced a commitment of up to \$90 million for this Project. The Province is currently working with Transport Canada officials to finalize the funding agreement.

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