
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007OTP0096-000899
July 10, 2007

Office of the Premier
Ministry of Transportation

SEA-TO-SKY HIGHWAY UPGRADE PASSES HALFWAY MARK

BRITANNIA BEACH – Improvements to the safety and efficiency of the Sea-to-Sky Highway are now more than 50 per cent complete, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

With completion of a 10-km stretch between Furry Creek and Gonzales Creek, 59 km of the 100-km highway has now been upgraded. The \$600-million project, which will increase public safety with gentler curves and longer sightlines, and improve reliability and shorten travel times with more passing lanes, is on time and on budget.

“Reaching this milestone shows how the combined expertise of the public and private sectors will deliver improved safety, efficiency and other benefits to the travelling public,” said Campbell. “These upgrades will improve both safety and economic opportunities that will benefit local communities and First Nations, and the entire province.”

The Sea-to-Sky Highway is also part of the Hydrogen Highway, a planned network of hydrogen fuel stations that will stretch from Whistler to Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey and, eventually, down the west coast of North America. B.C. has signed a memorandum of understanding with California that commits to join with other jurisdictions to build a hydrogen highway from British Columbia to Baja California.

The Sea-to-Sky upgrade project is a unique partnership that involves both private and public segments. S2S Transportation Group has a \$400-million capital component in its contract to design, build, finance, operate and deliver a safe and reliable highway through a 25-year performance-based contract. The Province has invested \$200 million.

S2S’s share of the project includes:

- Four lanes from Horseshoe Bay to Ansell Place.
- Two-, three- and four-lane sections from north of Lions Bay to Murrin Park.
- Four lanes from north of Murrin Park through Squamish.
- Three lanes from Squamish to Whistler.

The Province’s upgrades include:

- Three lanes between Culliton and Cheakamus, north of Squamish (completed in late 2004).
- Four lanes from Ansell Place to Lions Bay, north of Horseshoe Bay (completed in December 2005, 1½ years ahead of schedule).

“The public is once again seeing the benefits of a private-public partnership, especially with the innovative construction methods being utilized on this project,” Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon said. “I am extraordinarily proud that this major project is ahead of schedule and remains on budget.”

While the safety of the travelling public is the priority for upgrading the Sea-to-Sky Highway, communities along the corridor are also benefiting, including First Nations. In December of last year, the Lil'wat First Nation and the Province signed an agreement that provided for widening the highway through the Lil'wat's traditional territory in exchange for land and funding for economic development.

"The Lil'wat want to share in the economic benefits the new highway is bringing, and will continue to bring to the region," Chief Leonard Andrew said. "The agreement we reached with the Province allows our members to pursue employment, training and other opportunities."

The Province is also working with the Squamish Nation on a similar agreement.

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project is scheduled for completion in 2009.

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