



# **Corporate** NO: R012

# **Report** COUNCIL DATE: January 24, 2000

## **REGULAR COUNCIL**

**TO: Mayor & Council**    **DATE: January 19, 2000**

**FROM: Manager, Land Development and Transportation**  
**Engineering Department**    **FILE: 4002-015**

**SUBJECT: Additional Fraser River Crossing - Planning and Evaluation Study by MoTH**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report for information
2. Pass a resolution requesting “That the Ministry of Transportation and Highways undertake additional evaluation prior to finalising a short-list of alignment options.”

## **INTENT**

To provide Council with an overview of the planning and evaluation study for an additional Fraser River Crossing completed by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH).

## **BACKGROUND**

The TRANSPORT 2021 project and the MoTH South Coast Systems Plan both identified the need for an additional crossing of the Fraser River at a location to be determined between Fort Langley and the Port Mann Bridge. The Highway 15 study prepared for the MoTH evaluated a number of alternative configurations for a southern bridgehead to connect to Highway 15 and the U.S. Border. There is a consensus that an additional crossing is required to accommodate and facilitate growth in the region. Surrey had prepared a conceptual design for the south bridgehead at 184 Street in anticipation of a crossing study and as part of long range planning for the Port Kells area and South Fraser Perimeter Road (please see Appendix A).

In late 1998, MoTH commissioned a consultant to undertake a study of the need for an additional Fraser River Crossing and to identify and analyze various corridors that could be suitable for the crossing. The draft final

report was submitted in September 1999. This report provides a high level review of alternative locations with the intent of being able to narrow the list of options down to a select few for more detailed study. As identified in their letter of December 23, 1999 (Appendix B), the Ministry had intended to keep this study confidential until there had been further stakeholder input.

The MoTH met with stakeholders three times to discuss this project. The first meeting was to ascertain stakeholder issues and preferences at which time Surrey presented all of its information regarding the Barnston Island alignment and at which time the Township of Langley voiced strong opposition for any alignment through the Township. At the second meeting, five corridor and various specific alignments within each corridor were presented; the proposed evaluation measures were also reviewed and discussed. At the last meeting, the draft final report was presented and discussed, and stakeholders were requested to submit written comments to the Ministry. It should be noted that Surrey did not participate in the development of the Terms of Reference for this study.

Surrey staff completed their review of the draft final report in October 1999 and concluded that the report was incomplete and, therefore, informed the Ministry that staff were not prepared to bring the report forward to Surrey Council and to the public (see Appendix C, second page) for their consideration. Subsequently a copy of the report has been leaked to the press and now the Ministry has adopted the position that the report is complete. Surrey staff maintain that the report is incomplete but the Ministry has advised that due to budgetary constraints, not all possible options were evaluated and no additional work is contemplated.

## DISCUSSION

The study (see the Executive Summary in Appendix D) developed four general corridors with one or more specific alignments in each corridor for consideration. These corridors included:

1. Barnston Island across to Pitt Meadows (approximately 176 Street or 184 Street)
2. 200 Street Crossing across to Maple Ridge
3. Cottonwood Crossing across to Maple Ridge (approximately 218 Street)
4. Albion Ferry replacement

The Barnston Island and 200 Street crossing alignments all contemplate high level crossings (about 46 metres) of the Fraser River (similar to Alex Fraser Bridge) as per Transport Canada marine requirements for navigable waters. The Cottonwood and Albion Ferry crossing alignments contemplate a low level crossing (about 26 metres) with the alternative of constructing a very low crossing (about 12 metres) with a swing bridge.

All of the preferred alignments within each corridor were evaluated using the MoTH Multiple Account Evaluation process. The study concluded that the Barnston Island crossing, following a 176 Street or 184 Street alignment, was not feasible due to cost of the need to tunnel under the main channel of the Fraser River. The study made this determination based on the conflict between a bridge structure and flight paths for the Pitt Meadows Airport. Surrey recommended to the Ministry that there was another alternative, namely, a hybrid of a 200 Street option and the Barnston Island option. This option would use the 200 Street corridor on the north side of the river and use Barnston Island to proceed west and cross Parsons Channel at approximately 184 Street to connect to Highway 1 and the South Fraser Perimeter Road with a new interchange.

As part of the evaluation process, the study examined both the positive and the negative impacts of each corridor option. Based on a review of this part of the process, staff believe there are a number of key elements that appear to be either missing or incorrect. Specifically, the report recommends that any new facility be tolled, yet the evaluation does not include a financial analysis to show either the cost or the revenue associated

with the tolls and the impact upon the various options. The report does not adequately consider the fact that the Barnston Island crossing would be very beneficial from a Provincial perspective by providing a direct connection from the north side of the Fraser River to the U.S. Border via Highway 15.

The report also equates obtaining Agricultural Land Commission approvals with that of DFO and MoELP approvals, which is incorrect because the former is regulatory while the latter is both regulatory and capital cost intensive. The report also, in part, dismisses the Barnston Island option due to impacts on Surrey Bend, yet the preferred Barnston Island alignment does not impact Surrey Bend. A key oversight was the impact of the proposed crossing alternatives on the municipal road networks. Specifically, the 200 Street, Cottonwood and Albion crossings would all require extensive capacity upgrades to the municipal road network in Langley and possibly Surrey, yet the report does not include the financial impacts of these upgrades.

The City of Surrey is the critical transportation hub for the Lower Mainland - Highways 1, 10, 15 and 99 all travel through Surrey, CN Rail and Southern Rail of BC mainline (including the access to Roberts Bank) travel through Surrey, the principal goods movement port of entry to the U.S. is in Surrey and the major personal port of entry is also in Surrey. For this reason, any major addition to the transportation network across Fraser River for the Lower Mainland should also consider the impact upon the transportation network in Surrey.

One concern is that by providing a direct connection from the north side of the Fraser River to Highway 1 and to Highway 15 and the U.S. Border, less expensive industrial property in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows could become viable and provide industrial development competition to Surrey and Langley.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is staff's position that the Fraser River Crossing Study is not complete in that it did not consider other alignment options that may be viable, and some of the analytical work that was performed appears to be incomplete. It is recommended that Council pass a resolution requesting MoTH to carry out additional evaluation of alignment options prior to concluding a preferred crossing alternative.

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Attachment

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