



Corporate

NO: R228

Report

COUNCIL DATE: December 9, 2002

REGULAR COUNCIL			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	December 3, 2002
FROM:	General Manager, Engineering	FILE:	8630-20(FRC)
SUBJECT:	New Fraser River Crossing and South Fraser Perimeter Road - Status Update		

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

To bring Council up to date with the status of planning and project development of the New Fraser River Crossing and of the South Fraser Perimeter Road (SFPR).

BACKGROUND

Traffic congestion is increasing in the Lower Mainland. Routes across and along the Fraser River are of particular concern. Traffic back-ups from Highway 1 and the Port Mann Bridge impact Surrey on a daily basis. Good transportation is essential to regional and municipal economic growth.

To help deal with this overall problem, two initiatives are underway. Firstly, TransLink is pursuing a new Fraser River Crossing under a public-private-partnership toll financing approach. Secondly, the Province, with support from TransLink and area municipalities, is carrying out a Fraser Corridor Program Study to develop an overall plan to deal with congestion in this corridor. Funding mechanisms for the components of the corridor program (such as SFPR) remain to be determined.

New Fraser River Crossing

Work by TransLink and its consultants is progressing on the New Fraser River Crossing project. Three options

for the crossing and its connecting roadways are being considered:

- A 200 Street bridge option with connecting roadways to 200 Street in Langley and to 96 Avenue in Surrey,
- A Barnston Island tunnel option with connecting roadways to 192 Street and to 96 Avenue in Surrey, and
- A combination option with a 200 Street bridge and connecting roadways to 192 Street and to 96 Avenue.

Each of these route options is currently being studied in more detail. Preliminary environmental and socio-economic impact comparative analyses are underway, additional geotechnical investigation is being conducted, an hydraulic model of the bridge option is being prepared, and further analysis of tunneling feasibility is being conducted. More detailed traffic modeling has been conducted to aid in establishing the total required scope of roadway upgrading associated with the project. Work is ongoing to prepare a Project Definition document which will establish the functional specifications for the preferred option(s), to refine the business case for the project, and to determine public-private partnership procurement methodology. The concept is that the crossing will be financed through toll revenues with minimal need for public funding.

TransLink is seeking to reach agreements with the affected municipalities early in 2003 on project scope and detailed requirements. One of the major issues to be resolved is the financial responsibility for road improvements which may be triggered by the project but which falls outside the limits established for financing and delivery by a private consortium. The traffic modeling currently underway is to identify the overall road improvement needs triggered by the new crossing. Various mechanisms will be looked at for funding any identified "off project" road elements.

The overall planned schedule still anticipates a public-private partnership contract award in 2004 with the project complete and open to traffic in late 2006 or early 2007.

The attached brochure, which has been produced by TransLink as part of the project's ongoing public information program, provides some further details.

Fraser Corridor Program / South Fraser Perimeter Road

Council's position is that Surrey supports the New Fraser River Crossing if the South Fraser Perimeter Road is also carried out in conjunction with the new crossing, and that the SFPR has a higher priority for Surrey. In other words, there needs to be linkage in funding between the two projects.

The Ministry of Transportation, in anticipation of Federal funding under the Infrastructure Program which could potentially be applied to the SFPR, initiated a corridor planning and preliminary design study of the proposed facility in 1999. Although this funding program was subsequently announced, it did not have the anticipated scope to fund a project such as the SFPR, estimated to have a construction cost in the order of \$400 million. Consequently, the preliminary design study, which was completed in 2001, was "shelved".

The Ministry now advise that the project has been reactivated under the Fraser Corridor Program being administered by their Partnerships Department. The Fraser Corridor Program (refer to the figure attached) is an overall study to identify what road works or new road elements are needed in the Fraser Corridor. The study includes the South Fraser Perimeter Road and aspects of the New Fraser River Crossing, the North Fraser Perimeter Road, and Highway No. 1. Work on each of these elements is as follows:

South Fraser Perimeter Road

Further work being considered on the SFPR project includes additional geotechnical investigation and community consultation, work to address community concerns respecting alignments and to address the extension of the project between Highways 91 and 99.

North Fraser Perimeter Road

Work planned on the North Fraser Perimeter Road includes investigation of improvements at the north end of the Queensborough Bridge with potential for Federal funding under the Border Crossings initiative, and investigation of improvements at the Pitt River bridge. The remainder of the NFPR is considered by the Ministry to be a regional/municipal responsibility.

Highway 1

Further work to be undertaken on Highway 1 involves the updating of existing planning reports and completion of long-range plans for widening and interchange improvements from Port Mann to 200 Street.

New Fraser River Crossing

The only work on the New Fraser River Crossing included in the Corridor Program is the coordinated planning of the linkages of the new facility to Highways 7 and 1 and the SFPR.

The Ministry has not indicated a schedule for the completion of this planning work and, aside from funding the above noted planning work, no funding has been identified for any of the capital improvements which will be indicated by the various plans.

DISCUSSION

Surrey staff are actively working with TransLink and the Ministry of Transportation on both the project development of the New Fraser River Crossing and on the Fraser Corridor Program planning. Based on investigation to date, it appears that the New Fraser Crossing can be largely self-financing through toll revenues and thus has a high probability of implementation. Unlike the new crossing, funding for the South Fraser Perimeter Road has no identified source other than the City, TransLink and the Province plus possible Federal cost-sharing. Staff will continue to pursue the linkage of the South Fraser Perimeter Road with the New Fraser Crossing, in line with Council's resolution, and will continue to pursue both Provincial and Federal funding in order for the South Fraser Perimeter Road to be realized. However, the facts are that the New Fraser River Crossing is proceeding with the strong likelihood of private/toll funding. The SFPR cannot be financed on the same basis and still awaits senior government funding. Consequently we are unable to report, at this time, that Councils' objective of linkage in funding between the two projects is being achieved.

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