
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Transportation
Office of the Premier

PREMIER LAUNCHES GATEWAY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

VANCOUVER – Premier Gordon Campbell unveiled a comprehensive \$3-billion plan to open up the province’s transportation network today in Vancouver. The plan includes a new Pitt River Bridge, the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge, including the largest investment in cycling infrastructure in the province’s history and expansion of public transit across the Port Mann Bridge for the first time since 1986, and a new South Fraser bypass route from Delta Port to Highway 1 in Surrey.

“Congestion is having an increasingly negative effect on B.C.’s economy, communities and families,” said Campbell. “The Gateway Program is a wide-ranging plan to meet the needs of our growing economy, increasing Asia-Pacific trade, and a growing population.”

Details of the new plan have been released today in a Gateway Program Definition Report. The report includes a review of current transportation conditions in the Lower Mainland, future trends, proposed improvements to the region’s transportation network, and key activities to be carried out over the next 18 months.

“Our existing bridges and highways in the Lower Mainland are well beyond their designed capacities,” said Campbell. “The Port Mann Bridge is now congested for 13 hours a day and, on a bad day, it can take two hours to get from Burnaby to Langley. Truck traffic is being forced onto residential streets in Delta and Surrey that were never designed to carry them. Volume on the Pitt River Bridge has tripled over the last 15 years. We know improvements are needed and we need to take action now.”

Key elements of the Gateway Program include:

- The North Fraser Perimeter Road, including the new six-lane Pitt River Bridge, connecting Maple Ridge and New Westminster;
- The South Fraser Perimeter Road connecting Delta Port with the Golden Ears Bridge and Highway 1 in Surrey;
- Twinning the Port Mann Bridge, allowing for the re-introduction of transit service and including the potential for future light rail transit;
- Widening Highway 1 from Vancouver to Langley, including extension of HOV lanes into the Fraser Valley; and,
- A \$50-million investment in cycling infrastructure – the largest in the history of the province.

“Right now we are working with the federal government and Translink to make major improvements in the Lower Mainland’s transportation network,” said Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon, noting projects such as Richmond Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit, Coquitlam Light Rail Transit, the Border Infrastructure Program, and the Golden Ears Bridge to connect Langley with Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows. “But we need to plan for the future and address the long-term needs of the people of the Lower Mainland. The Gateway Program will move us towards having a transportation network that meets the needs of people and the demands of the economy.”

The Gateway Program Definition Report details how economic growth, population growth and changing regional travel patterns are placing additional strain on the capacity, reliability and safety of British Columbia’s largest trade and commuter routes connecting ports, airports, rail yards, town centres and communities. At the same time, the report concludes that there has been little investment in the transportation infrastructure since the mid-1980s:

- The four-lane Port Mann Bridge was built in 1964 when the population of Greater Vancouver was 800,000. Today, the population of Greater Vancouver is 2.1 million.
- The population of the Lower Mainland is projected to grow by another 900,000 over the next 25 years – that’s the equivalent of almost the entire population of Nova Scotia.
- Daily traffic on the Port Mann Bridge is 20 per cent higher than San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge, despite having fewer lanes.
- In the past five years, the number of registered vehicles in the GVRD grew by 12.5 per cent – greater than population growth during the same time period.
- There has been no significant increase in major road and goods movement capacity since the completion of the Alex Fraser Bridge in 1986.

Consultation with municipalities and Translink is ongoing and has been underway for more than two years, and has included approximately 100 meetings with local and regional government officials and representatives. With the release of this report, a detailed public consultation will begin, starting this spring. These consultations will ensure project designs consider feedback on congestion, access, safety and reliability. Technical work, environmental assessment and design refinements will progress over the next 18 months.

More information on the Gateway Program, downloadable copies of the program definition report, a schedule of public consultations, artist renderings, graphics and maps are available online at www.gatewayprogram.bc.ca.

2 backgrounder(s) attached. 1 factsheet(s) attached.

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