
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2013PREM0095-001430
Sept. 20, 2013

Office of the Premier
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

B.C. moves forward with bridge to replace Massey Tunnel

VANCOUVER – Today, Premier Christy Clark announced that the Government of British Columbia will move ahead on the project to replace the George Massey Tunnel, with construction of a new bridge on the existing Highway 99 corridor to begin in 2017.

“We are keeping our promise to replace the George Massey Tunnel and improve the Highway 99 corridor, starting in 2017,” said Premier Christy Clark. “Congestion at the tunnel is frustrating for families and stalling the economy. A new bridge will improve travel times for transit, commuters and commercial users, and open the corridor up to future rapid transit options.”

The first step in the project was to consult with the public and stakeholders about support for a new crossing and on crossing options. The findings were summarized in two reports, the second of which was released today. In addition to indicating public support for a new bridge on the existing Highway 99 corridor, other key findings include:

- Strong support for resolving the problem of congestion, safety and reliability at the Massey Tunnel.
- Strong desire for transit, cycling and pedestrian improvements, including protecting the Highway 99 corridor for future rapid transit.
- Doing nothing is not an option; strong opposition to only improving the existing tunnel.

With a consensus that people want a new bridge on the existing Highway 99 corridor, the next step in the project is the preparation of a more detailed project scope and business case.

“With the Port Mann Bridge open to traffic and the South Fraser Perimeter Road nearing completion, we’re moving to fix the next of B.C.’s worst traffic bottlenecks,” said Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone. “Today, we’re getting to work to develop a solution that will improve the movement of people and goods on a highway that is important to commuters, and vital to our Asia Pacific Gateway.”

Engineering and technical work is now underway to develop a project scope and business case for the new bridge and associated Highway 99 corridor improvements. This work will be presented for public discussion next spring, ensuring that the project remains on track for construction to begin in 2017.

In the interim, the ministry will proceed immediately to lengthen the Steveston off-ramp on Highway 99 at the north end of the George Massey Tunnel. This will improve safety and reduce Highway 99 congestion for motorists at this location. The project will go to tender by the end of September.

“Traffic congestion at the George Massey Tunnel has been the number one concern for residents and businesses in Delta for well over a decade,” said Corporation of Delta Mayor Lois Jackson. “Premier Christy Clark and the B.C. Government are to be commended for making the tunnel replacement a priority issue and for its timely commencement of public consultation to gauge community support. The tunnel replacement will form a critical part of the transportation infrastructure supporting the movement of people and goods; strengthening the local and regional economy as well as trade through the Asia-Pacific Gateway.”

“Congestion at the George Massey Tunnel negatively impacts the safe and efficient movement of goods by truck, effectively slowing our economy,” added BC Trucking Association President and CEO Louise Yako. “We support an improved crossing and I look forward to providing input from our association and membership as the project develops.”

“The Province’s continued commitment to improve and expand our highway infrastructure, like the replacement of the George Massey Tunnel, supports our economy,” B.C. Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association President Jack Davidson said. “In addition to the good-paying construction jobs these projects create, there are long-term benefits to communities and for all road users.”

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure intends to open an office for the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project on Steveston Highway near the tunnel, where the public can learn more about the project. The office will be open later this fall.

Consultations for the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project were held in two phases between November 2012 and April 2013. There were more than 2,000 participants in the on-line engagement and at open houses in Delta, Richmond and Surrey.

Learn More:

Learn more about the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project at www.masseytunnel.ca

The report on the second phase of consultations is available at:

<http://engage.gov.bc.ca/masseytunnel/information-centre/document-library/>

A rendering of a bridge on the Highway 99 corridor is available at: <http://ow.ly/p2aS3>

An animated video flyover is available at: <http://ow.ly/p2bix>

A backgrounder follows.

Contacts:

Sam Oliphant

Office of the Premier

250 952-7252

Kate Trotter
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
250 356-8241

BACKGROUND

Progress on Highway 1 improvements and other major projects

The B.C. government's commitment to invest \$650 million over 10 years into Highway 1 between Kamloops and the Alberta border was announced by Premier Christy Clark at the Union of B.C. Municipalities meeting in 2012.

This year, the government of British Columbia moved ahead with work to widen sections of the Trans-Canada Highway between Kamloops and the Alberta border, to improve safety and support goods movement, trade and tourism.

The ten-year Highway 1 Kamloops to Alberta Four-Laning Program will create an estimated 3,300 direct jobs.

Highway 1 projects underway in 2013:

- Phase 2 of the Monte Creek to Pritchard project, which will widen seven kilometres of Highway 1 to four lanes and construct an interchange at the community of Pritchard.
- Phase 1 of the Pritchard to Hoffman's Bluff project, which will widen three kilometres of Highway 1 to four lanes.
- Five other Highway 1 projects are in various stages of development.

Cariboo Connector Phase 2:

- The \$200-million second phase to widen sections of Highway 97 to four lanes between Prince George and Cache Creek is well underway.
- Two of the nine projects have been completed.
- Construction is nearing completion on another two projects.
- All nine will be completed or underway by 2017.
- This builds on 18 projects valued at \$240-million in Phase 1, completed in 2011.
- At the completion of Phase 2, almost 50 per cent of the 440 km highway between Cache Creek and Prince George will be either three or four lanes wide.

Other major four-lane improvement projects in B.C.:

- Highway 2: 8th Street to Rolla Road under construction. Value \$36.5 million.
- Highway 2: Tupper Creek to 192nd Road under construction. Value \$39.2 million.
- Highway 3: Friday Creek to Laidlaw under construction. Value \$10.9 million.
- Highway 97: Winfield to Oyama completed August 2013. Value \$77.9 million.

Contact:

Kate Trotter
Government Communications and Public Engagement
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250 356-8241

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