

Subject: Gateway Project
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Date: Thu, 25 Aug 2005 15:37:01 -0700
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Dear Prime Minister Martin:

I am astounded to hear that Transport Minister Lapierre has announced federal plans to financially support the "Gateway" transportation plans that the BC government is trying to force on Greater Vancouver communities without their support or involvement. I don't know how much information your government has on the feelings of municipalities in our region, but many communities, including those on the receiving end of any increase in traffic, are opposed to this project at this point.

Studies across North America and beyond have shown that building more roads does not ease congestion. The spectacular Vancouver area has been blessed with an Agricultural Land Reserve and the GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan, both which have helped us curb sprawl. A twinning of our freeway will open up areas for more sprawl and goes against our entire region's livability strategy. So far the province has not produced any studies for the affected municipalities to show why this road-building program will work here, when it has not been shown to work elsewhere. The government's term for moving ahead with this project without taking the time to consult and ensure it is workable is "fast track." I would describe it as an ill-advised use of taxpayer money which could very possibly be regretted for decades to come.

In the early 1990s, our own Premier, Gordon Campbell, then mayor of Vancouver, stated "freeways do not solve traffic problems...as long as I'm mayor, a freeway is not an issue." I guess he's not mayor anymore, but I would like to know the explanation for the change in stance. There has been no effort to confront the very real criticism of planners and multiple municipal Councils (Vancouver, Burnaby, Port Moody, Coquitlam among them). In 1991 Gordon Campbell went on to say: "In the 1960s and 1970s we were bold enough to break with the conventional transportation wisdom. We stopped freeways from destroying our neighborhoods. As a result, today, some of the healthiest inner city neighbourhoods in North America are found in greater Vancouver. We cannot afford to fall into the trap of conventional wisdom in 1991 any more than we could in 1971."

Your government has committed to show leadership as we attempt to meet our Kyoto targets. Surely you are aware that increasing urban sprawl and commute times will not assist us in those efforts. As well, our society faces escalating health costs. Urban sprawl has been linked to health problems such as obesity, stress disorders and asthma. I am sure you want to ensure you do not contribute to projects that will exacerbate pollution and health problems.

Until we have properly reviewed and considered all other options: e.g., more light rail, more use of our rail and water for shipping, high occupancy and/or commercial/transit lanes, we cannot possibly embark on

such a massively expensive project that reeks of very short term gain for very long term pain. Even in the short term we are likely to see new bottlenecks emerge as already congested regional and municipal roads can't cope with an increase in traffic coming off the freeway.

Below I have included a motion our Port Moody City Council endorsed unanimously some months ago.

WHEREAS our region will be significantly impacted by the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge and the widening of Highway #1, yet there has been limited consultation or study to confirm that this multi-million dollar project will be a long-term solution to the problem of traffic congestion and goods movement within the region,

AND WHEREAS the Province recently released a report entitled "Weather, Climate and the Future: B.C.'s Plan," which contains various recommended actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our province, including incorporating climate change considerations in B.C.'s transportation planning and investment strategies,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City of Port Moody send a letter to the Premier of British Columbia and the Provincial Minister of Transportation requesting that, in regards to the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge and the widening of Highway 1:

- 1) a consultative process take place with affected municipalities,
- 2) appropriate studies be undertaken to ensure the proposed plans offer the most fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable long term solution to our region's congestion and goods movement problems,
- 3) ensure that the proposed road expansion is consistent with the Province's greenhouse gas reduction strategies and the GVRD's goal of being a livable region,

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to all municipalities within the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Translink, the GVRD, the Livable Region Coalition and the Northeast Sector MLAs.

Sincerely,

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