

# **Livable Region Coalition**

## ***Mission Statement*** (Dec. 2004)

The B.C. government has announced a massive freeway expansion plan in the heart of the Lower Mainland. It is expected to cost at least \$1.4 billion. The project would widen the Trans-Canada Highway to at least eight lanes between Langley and Vancouver and would require building a new freeway bridge alongside the Port Mann Bridge.

We, the undersigned, strongly believe that the provincial government's freeway expansion proposal is a serious threat to the quality of life in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. We recognize that traffic congestion in this area is a serious concern for both commuters and the goods movement industry. However, there is no evidence that freeway expansion will provide more than a short-term solution. In fact, extensive studies show that freeway expansion encourages sprawl and generates many more car trips; the B.C. government's plan will therefore worsen, rather than reduce traffic congestion over the longer term (3-5 plus years). Ultimately, such short-term expensive fixes for regional transportation are counterproductive, and come at a very high-cost to taxpayers.

Alternative solutions exist. This region and its citizens require smarter, more effective and responsible transportation solutions that rest on inter-governmental cooperation, respect for regional plans and full citizen participation.

To date, the provincial government has pre-determined and pre-announced the outcome of its Ministry's studies and of a public consultation that has yet to begin. Various regional concerns and local voices have been disregarded. The highway expansion threatens to undermine the successes of the GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan and regionally adopted long-term transportation plans. It is also inconsistent with national government objectives to "meet our Kyoto obligations, to have clean air and water, and to have cities that in 30 years make sense and have not just destroyed themselves through sprawl."<sup>1</sup>

As concerned citizens and advocates for sustainable transportation, we insist that a full menu of viable transportation alternatives and land-use plans be evaluated by the BC government, in full cooperation with municipal and regional government, stakeholders and local citizens.

Signed, members of Livable Region Coalition

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<sup>1</sup> Hon. John Godfrey, Canada's Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, in: "Divvy up gas-tax revenues by population, minister says," *The Globe and Mail*, June 29, 2004