

# SEA-TO-SKY HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

## Lions Bay Update

October, 2007

### BACKGROUND

The impact on Lions Bay of the improvements currently being made to the Sea to Sky Highway will be immense, and consultations with the Village on issues such as design, speed, safety and noise control have been ongoing since 2002.

A Community Advisory Group – CAG – made up of interested and specialist members of the community was formed in 2003, and met frequently with the Ministry and contractors to advance the Village's priorities and protect its interests around a framework of potential outcomes.

In 2006 it became clear that it was time for Council to become more involved, and CAG morphed into the Highways Advisory Committee, with Council members augmenting the dedicated volunteer group. Between CAG and HAC, we have held literally hundreds of hours of meetings, with and without the Ministry and Contractor, during which many concerns have been raised and solutions proposed.

Sometimes progress has seemed frustratingly slow, with few commitments made and many issues left to simmer on the back burner. However, we have recently obtained significant long-term commitments, expressed by the Ministry in writing, in the areas of safety, highway design, noise mitigation and village atmosphere. In the short term, regarding the building process itself, we have also obtained concessions in terms of hours of work in the Village (the Contractor's original plan was round-the-clock construction – we insisted on a quiet sleep period, and quiet weekends, neither of which were in the original plan), noise, light pollution and speed enforcement.

Listed below are the **firm commitments** we have been given so far.

## **FIRM COMMITMENTS**

- 1. Overpass at Brunswick Beach:** that is, the highway will pass OVER the access road to the community.
- 2. Underpass at Kelvin Grove:** that is, the highway will pass UNDER the access road to both sides of the community.

## **REGARDING NOISE MITIGATION**

### **3. Noise reduction**

Noise reduction is to be 4 – 5 decibels, plus what is termed “best efforts.” We are promised that, overall, In 2025 the noise levels will be less than they are today. This will be achieved by the methods listed below.

### **4. Quiet Pavement**

Quiet pavement – open-graded asphalt to help absorb tire noise - is confirmed throughout the Village, though the question of continuing it north to M Creek is still under review.

### **5. Split Grade Highway**

At Kelvin Grove, starting at the end of the on-ramp south of Harvey Creek and going south to the village boundary. This is planned to help block traffic noise.

### **6. Noise walls or berms**

Proposed location, height and design of these walls was given at the July 12 public meeting, but details are not yet finalized. In some cases it may be possible to install a berm as opposed to a wall. Whether the walls are berms, concrete or wire, it is agreed that they need to block noise.

### **7. Green noise walls at condominiums**

Detailed design is still to come but the walls are confirmed. Heights will be established as needed.

### **8. Residential treatments**

MoT is moving toward this being the solution for certain affected properties. Discussions have been held with some residents. The Village would still like to explore the other options before accepting this as the final solution.

## **9. Covered (paved) bridge expansion joints**

To eliminate thumping noise as traffic passes.

## **REGARDING SPEED AND SAFETY**

### **10. Highway designed to operate at posted speed of 60 kph**

New highway is to be designed to a speed of 60 kph., vs. the current 80 kph design. Posted speed is to be 60 kph. The question of speed enforcement is addressed below.

### **11. Highway designed with speed-limiting curves**

### **12. Planted median throughout the Village, excepting bridge crossings and current four lane sections.**

The median will extend throughout the Village, and will be planted throughout, with the possible exception of the existing bridge and the narrow four-lane section between Alberta Creek and Harvey Creek. A median of some kind will certainly be provided, and the preference is still for a planted median, but if the available space in these areas is too narrow to be planted, or if weight considerations preclude a planted median on the bridge, MoT will consider some form of post and hanging basket system or banner decoration for these sections. MoT will install a drip irrigation system in all planted areas but the municipality may have to maintain it.

### **13. Inclusion of 1.5 metre marked cycling lanes through the Village of Lions Bay**

### **14. Narrow lane width to slow traffic (accomplished through painted lines)**

Painted lines will be wider to give sense of narrow lanes to slow traffic.

### **15. Police lay-by and pullout locations within the Village**

The North end site is to be moved to have it within the Village boundaries. Others will be located at the interchanges, on/off ramps, exit to Brunswick Pit and on wider shoulder areas.

### **16. Improved Lions Bay Avenue interchange through better signage and longer acceleration/deceleration lanes.**

This refers to the whole Central Lions Bay sector. Improvements are committed, but detail is still under design/review.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **17. Concrete walls at interchanges**

There will be concrete walls at the interchanges. Samples of possible surface types are to be available at next week's MoT meetings. The question of the upgrading or renovation of the wall at Lions Bay Central is still to be addressed.

**18. Wire walls along the west side of the alignment with plantings at the base of the walls and on the walls themselves designed to cover the walls with greenery.**

### **19. Replacement of Tidewater trail**

### **20. Northbound and southbound bus stops at new interchanges**

Actual locations to be determined in consultation with residents and Translink.

**21. New signage throughout, including sign references to Brunswick Road and not Brunswick Beach**

**22. 15 –minute drop off parking spots near Brunswick bus stops, but no other large parking area**

**23. As many trees preserved as possible at Brunswick for visual/privacy buffer, with berming and landscaping of areas with trees between the access road tree buffer along the railway tracks**

### **24. Vegetation planter treatment on the Kelvin Grove underpass**

Two-foot-wide planters will be installed on the bridge, to allow for the planning of vegetation that will grow to overhang the bridge railing. The four corners of the site will be carefully landscaped, including mature trees. Irrigation will be installed.

### **25. Village lighting**

There is to be a balance between safety and village feel. The issue of light pollution to residents remains to be addressed.

### **26. Bridge at Magnesia Creek**

MoT is committed to getting A bridge for the site. Negotiations have to be completed as to its installation, approach roads and abutments.

## **UNDER DISCUSSION**

### **NOISE MITIGATION**

The location, height and surface of the proposed noise walls remains an issue for serious discussion. A wide range of options have been proposed and considered, and new suggestions continue to be made. The central issue is to achieve the optimal protection for affected residents, particularly those immediately adjacent to the highway, and to hold the Ministry to its promise of “best efforts.” A significant issue of contention is the means by which noise levels are measured, and we have yet to achieve common ground in that area. A group of residents in Kelvin Grove have also put forward a proposal that we plan to advocate to the Ministry, despite its initial rejection.

#### **Additional sound walls on bridges**

The intention is to accommodate this idea but the engineering is a concern. Wind shear and weight are two factors. The new stresses have to be addressed to make this work. The MoT is trying to accommodate the structure.

### **INTERCONNECTIVITY**

#### **Pathway connectivity between Brunswick and Central Lions Bay**

A number of options exist, but while MoT supports the idea there are challenges. Budget constraints, terrain and the potential need for additional blasting all influence the decision. In addition, there is ongoing debate about the best location for this pathway. The Village Trails Committee is pursuing possible funding options through grants from the provincial government.

### **UNDERGROUND WIRING**

We have extensively advocated the argument that the work on this highway provides an ideal opportunity for all utility and service cables running through the village to be buried, thus eliminating the unsightly forest of utility poles that has a negative impact on the views of both residents and those passing through. Despite high-level discussions with BC Hydro, BC Transmission Corp, the BC Utilities Commission and the Ministry, we have so far been unsuccessful in our attempts. However, we continue to maintain the pressure.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Light Barriers**

In the long term, barriers to protect exposed homes from night traffic light can be installed at any time, and the Ministry argues that it may be best to wait until the work is complete, since barriers proposed for the sides of the road may solve the question. In the meantime the option of temporary light mitigation barriers at both Brunswick and Kelvin Grove is being addressed with Kiewit.

### **Public washrooms**

Residents at Kelvin Grove have been experiencing significant problems with passers-by trespassing on both private land and public areas to relieve themselves and to dispose of garbage. This ongoing concern has been raised at both the local and provincial level, and the Village has taken steps to mitigate the problem, but the situation remains acute and in the view of some residents could potentially worsen when the highway work is complete. The HAC will continue to pursue this with MoT, which is currently unwilling to install public facilities either south or north of the Village.

### **Gateway signage and “village atmosphere”**

The focus of the MoT small-group meetings and open house next week will be the Detailed Design Consultation Discussion Guide and feedback form. Those who took part in the previous public consultation will recognize the format. It will lay out the Ministry’s version of the story to date, and present residents with the opportunity to give their opinions on a number of issues, among them noise wall treatments, gateway signage and other “village atmosphere” issues such as lighting choices and landscape vegetation options.

A page will also be available at the back of this feedback guide for other comments, and residents are strongly urged to add their views on the outstanding issues that are listed above. They might also wish to use the opportunity of one-on-one discussion at the small-group meetings and the open house to express their opinions to the MoT staff in attendance.

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One of the driving principles of the Council and the Highway Advisory Committee is to ensure that we emerge from this long and painful experience with a net benefit for the community – a safe, handsome highway that provides a better public service while at the same time bringing no long-term negative impact to the quality of life in the Village. The more we can demonstrate public will, the more likely we are to achieve the aim we have in our sights: a better Lions Bay for all.