



To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** March 4, 2003
From: Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation **File:** 6460-01
Re: **GATEWAY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES -
PROPOSED INCLUSION OF THE BLUNDELL ROAD / NELSON ROAD
CORRIDOR IN THE SOUTHEAST RICHMOND INDUSTRIAL AREA**

Staff Recommendation

That the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council be requested to consider including the Blundell Road / Nelson Road corridor in the southeast Richmond in the list of transportation infrastructure priorities as outlined in its Major Commercial Transportation System to support the development of a comprehensive and integrated regional transportation network.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation

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Staff Report

Origin

The Greater Vancouver Gateway Council was formed in 1994 to advocate Greater Vancouver as a world transportation gateway that is able to capitalize on opportunities for growth from expanding world trade and tourism. Council members comprise senior executives from the seaports, airport, carriers and other companies engaged directly in Gateway transportation business.

The Gateway Council's main priority is the international competitiveness of the Gateway transportation industry and in 1998 the Council began developing a comprehensive vision for the future, which has focused the Council's efforts on three broad strategic areas including the identification of transportation infrastructure and facilities investment priorities. These recommended transportation investment priorities formed the basis for their Major Commercial Transportation System (MCTS), which plays a key role in TransLink's planning of strategic transportation improvements.

In light of the limited capacity of both Highway 99 and Highway 91 in meeting the growing regional travel demand as well as the on-going development of the Fraser Riverport Lands, this report recommends that the Gateway Council be requested to consider including the Blundell Road / Nelson Road corridor in the southeast Richmond industrial area in its list of infrastructure priorities.

Analysis

1. Southeast Richmond Industrial Area

The southeast Richmond industrial area, generally located south of Westminster Highway to the Fraser River between Savage Road and No. 9 Road, serves as an international gateway for goods movement and several other regional and provincial destinations similar to the function of the Fraser Surrey Docks and Annacis Terminal. With approximately 1,000 acres of industrial-zoned land, this area is one of the largest remaining industrial parks in the region with significant development growth including the Fraser River Port Authority lands (700 acres), EcoWaste Industries, Kingswood Industrial Park, Con-Force Structures and LaFarge Cement.

A wide variety of operations are located in the above area including manufacturers of pre-cast concrete structures, cement manufacturing facilities, waste management operations, goods distribution centres, and vehicle storage and distribution facilities. At full development, the southeast Richmond industrial area is projected to contain warehouse/distribution facilities and a mix of light industrial/office uses as well as several deep-sea terminals with ancillary uses such as container stuffing and de-stuffing and maintenance and storage facilities. By the end of 2003, this area is expected to generate 1,200 trucks per day, which would be dispersed in the surrounding road network.

2. Blundell Road / Nelson Road Corridor

Westminster Highway will remain as a two-lane rural arterial roadway west of Nelson Road in the long term as widening it to four lanes would have significant adverse impacts on the adjacent agricultural lands. Given the limitation of improving Westminster Highway, the existing road

network would not be adequate to accommodate the future growth in regional traffic along this east-west corridor, including that resulted from the development of the southeast Richmond industrial area. Based on recent traffic studies undertaken by staff and Fraser Riverport, a set of long-term transportation improvement objectives were therefore developed for the southeast Richmond industrial area with the following primary attributes:

- a new four-lane Blundell Road between Highway 99 and Nelson Road be provided to enhance regional east-west regional travel and serve as the primary access to the area;
- the new Blundell Road be connected with Highway 99 via a new full interchange; and
- Nelson Road from Blundell Road to Westminster Highway be widened to four lanes.

The resulting Blundell Road / Nelson Road corridor would function as a regional road connection between Highway 99 and Highway 91 through the southeast Richmond industrial area. This connection will support the growth of the area as a regional activity centre that operates as a major international gateway.

3. Existing Gateway Council Infrastructure Priorities - MCTS

As shown in the table below, the Gateway Council has identified a set of priority infrastructure projects in its Major Commercial Transportation System (MCTS) that include public road system improvements and expansions, rail system improvements and rapid transit between Vancouver and the airport and beyond.

Priority Level	Projects
1 st Priority	Trans-Canada Highway (Vancouver to Chilliwack) South Fraser Perimeter Road North Fraser Perimeter Road Massey Tunnel on Highway 99 Replacement of New Westminster Rail Bridge Rapid Transit - Downtown to the Airport and beyond
2 nd Priority	Low Level Road - North Shore to Burrard Inlet Highway 15 from Trans-Canada Highway to Border New Link from Pacific Border Crossing to Highway 99 Highway 17 from Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal to Highway 99
3 rd Priority	Bridge from Maple Ridge to Surrey/Langley New Sea-to-Sky Highway Improved Transit to Abbotsford Airport Pitt River Rail Bridge Fraser Canyon Rail Route Third Crossing over the Burrard Inlet

The Council recognizes that detailed plans and proposals must be developed in co-operation with all levels of government and other stakeholders for the implementation of these projects.

4. Inclusion of Blundell Road / Nelson Road Corridor in List of Gateway Council Infrastructure Priorities

The Gateway Council recognizes that a deteriorating road system and increased traffic congestion in the region can compromise the region's ability to serve Canada's international trade and tourism industries competitively. The southeast Richmond industrial area is already a

significant regional centre for international goods movement that will increase in importance as further development of the area continues. In turn, the extension and upgrade of the Blundell Road / Nelson Road corridor is critical to support current and future operations in the area in addition to the important benefits it provides to the regional road system. This infrastructure improvement therefore clearly meets the rationale identified by the Gateway Council in developing its list of infrastructure and facility investment priorities.

The Gateway Council is a strong advocate of regional infrastructure improvements to ensure the international competitiveness of the region as a major transportation gateway. The inclusion of the upgrade of the Blundell Road / Nelson Road corridor on its list of infrastructure priorities in the MCTS would help secure commitment to the project among the various stakeholders (i.e., City of Richmond, federal government, provincial government, TransLink, private industry) and expedite its implementation.

Financial Impact

None to the City at this time.

Conclusion

The Greater Vancouver Gateway Council has developed a list of transportation infrastructure and facility investment priorities that it believes are essential to achieve its vision of the region as the international "Gateway of Choice" for North America. Staff recommend that the Gateway Council be requested to consider adding the upgrade and extension of the Blundell Road / Nelson Road corridor in the southeast Richmond industrial area to its list of infrastructure priorities.

The new corridor will connect this significant regional centre for international goods movement with two of the three provincial highway systems and help support the future growth and competitiveness of the industrial area as a major transportation gateway. The inclusion of this corridor in the MCTS would ensure formal recognition of the need of improvements in the southeast Richmond by senior governments and private stakeholders who may play a key role in its implementation.



Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner

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