



To PW & T - Apr 24, 2003
To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** April 10, 2003
From: Gordon Chan, P. Eng. **File:** 6500-01
 Director, Transportation
Re: **TRANSLINK MAJOR ROAD NETWORK (MRN) – SUPPLEMENTAL MINOR CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECT – PROPOSED WIDENING OF WESTMINSTER HIGHWAY BETWEEN NELSON ROAD AND WESTMINSTER HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE**

Staff Recommendation

1. That the project to widen Westminster Highway to four lanes between Nelson Road and the Westminster Highway/Highway 91 Interchange be endorsed for cost-sharing as part of the TransLink Major Road Network Minor Capital Program.
2. That staff report back to Council on the outcome of the evaluation by the Major Roads Technical Advisory Committee on the above proposed submission to the Major Road Network Capital Development Program.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation
(Local 4021)

Att. 1

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Staff Report

Origin

At the September 9, 2002 regular Council meeting, Council endorsed the submission by the City of a number of road improvement projects on Richmond's component of the Major Road Network (MRN) for 50/50 cost-sharing with TransLink as part of its 2003 MRN Minor Capital Improvement Program. In February 2003, TransLink advised municipalities that it would accept supplemental submissions for 2003 on a one-time only basis, as the reallocation of funding within the program had created a higher level of block funding available to each municipality. This report recommends the supplemental submission of the widening to four lanes of Westminster Highway between Nelson Road and the Westminster Highway/Highway 91 Interchange for cost-sharing under TransLink's MRN Minor Capital Program.

Analysis

1. Major Road Network Elements in Richmond

Richmond's share of the MRN consists of 130 lane-kilometres, which represents about 6 percent of the entire MRN in the region. Richmond's components of the existing Major Road Network (MRN) are comprised of the following elements:

- No. 2 Road (Russ Baker Way to Steveston Highway including the No. 2 Road Bridge);
- Steveston Highway between No. 2 Road and Highway 99;
- Westminster Highway between No. 2 Road and Boundary Road;
- Alderbridge Way between No. 3 Road and Shell Road;
- Bridgeport Road between Highway 99 and Knight Street;
- Knight Street Corridor (Westminster Highway to south end of the Knight Street Bridge);
- No. 3 Road between Sea Island Way and Westminster Highway; and
- Gilbert Road between Westminster Highway and Dinsmore Bridge.

In addition, the City has applied to TransLink for inclusion in the MRN of the following sections of roads:

- Nelson Road between Westminster Highway and Blundell Road; and
- Blundell Road between Highway 99 and Nelson Road.

Although Blundell Road between No. 6 Road and No. 8 Road currently does not exist, an application for its consideration as part of the MRN is necessary at this time in order to be eligible to access future TransLink funding for use towards its construction.

2. Capital Cost-Sharing Arrangement for 2003

Per TransLink's 3-Year Transportation and Financial Plan, MRN minor capital funding is \$20 million in each of 2003 and 2004. Of this \$20 million, it was anticipated that \$15 million would be available as block funding for municipalities each year with the remaining \$5 million available for needs-based funding for larger scale projects of a regional significance. Subsequent to the City's initial submission of projects for cost-sharing under its share of block funding from the 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program, the total amount of needs-based funding was reallocated to block funding for 2003 only, which resulted in increased levels of block funding available to

all municipalities. TransLink therefore invited member municipalities to submit supplemental projects for consideration of 50/50 cost-sharing under the 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program.

3. Supplemental Submission to 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program – Widening of Westminster Highway to Four Lanes between Nelson Road and the Westminster Highway/Highway 91 Interchange

Staff propose the submission of the widening of Westminster Highway between Nelson Road and the Westminster Highway/Highway 91 Interchange (see Attachment 1) to TransLink as the supplemental project. The project involves the widening of Westminster Highway from two lanes to four lanes, including paved shoulders for cyclists, the installation of street lighting and the construction of enclosed storm drainage on the south side. An allowance has also been made for the upgrade of the existing CN Rail crossing east of No. 9 Road.

The above proposed improvements are part of the area road network enhancements to provide additional roadway capacity to meet both the current traffic demand and respond to anticipated traffic growth. The widening of this section of Westminster Highway, coupled with the planned Blundell Road/Nelson Road improvements, is also essential in establishing a continuous four-lane road connection between the Westminster Highway/Highway 91 Interchange and the Fraserport lands.

This project was previously planned for implementation beyond the 5-year horizon, as the primary focus of road investments by the City in this area was placed on Nelson Road and Blundell Road. As there could now possibly be additional funding available from TransLink in the MRN improvement program, staff are proposing to advance this project for construction as early as 2005. This accelerated timing also complements the current development pace in the Fraserport Lands.

To maximize the opportunity of TransLink funding availability, staff also propose to accrue any unused block funding from the City's 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program allocation as well as its 2004 and 2005 block funding allocations. The total accrued amount over the three-year period would allow the City to recover 50 percent of the anticipated total project costs.


Financial Impact

The preliminary estimated cost of the Westminster Highway widening project is \$6,525,000 and will be further refined in the detailed design process. If approved by TransLink, it is expected that the City will recover 50 percent of the total project costs (construction and land costs) up to a total maximum amount of \$3,262,500. As this opportunity for additional MRN funding arose only recently, this project is not included in the current 5-Year Capital Program of the City. This project would therefore be identified in the next submission of the 5-Year program for approval in 2004. Construction of this project, if approved, is expected to occur in 2005.

Conclusion

The widening of Westminster Highway to four lanes between Nelson Road and the Westminster Highway/Highway 91 Interchange is proposed as a supplemental submission for inclusion in the 2003 TransLink MRN Minor Capital Program for cost-sharing. This report seeks formal Council support for the submission to secure Richmond's allocation of block funding starting in 2003.

Staff will report back to Council on the result of the review and approval of the MRN Minor Capital Program by TransLink.

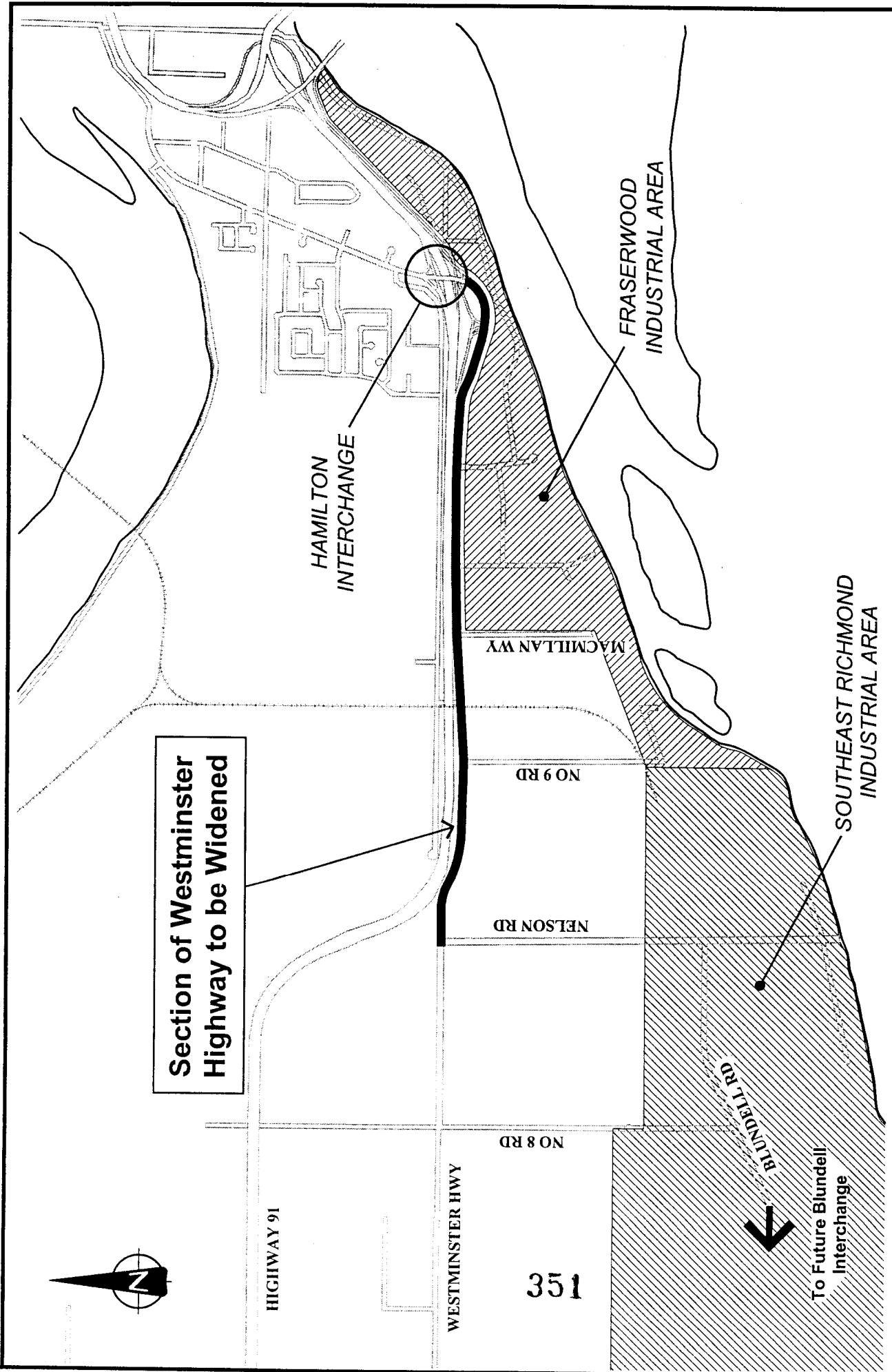


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JC:lce



Proposed Widening of Westminister Highway (4 Lanes from Nelson Road to Hwy 91/Hamilton Interchange)