



## Taylor Bridge Project

# SUMMARY REPORT



Ministry of  
Transportation  
and Infrastructure

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**PREPARED FOR:**

B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure  
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## INTRODUCTION

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Located on the Territory of the Treaty 8 First Nations, the Taylor Bridge is a two-lane, 712-metre-long bridge and a vital link for the North and South Peace regions and to the rest of British Columbia (B.C.). Situated along Highway 97, the Taylor Bridge connects northeastern B.C. to the rest of the province, Canada, and North America.

Opened in 1960, the Taylor Bridge is an ageing structure that has been identified as approaching the end of its service life. Planning for a long-term solution for the bridge is underway. The process includes two phases of public and stakeholder engagement.

The Ministry continues to consult with Treaty 8 First Nations in the area through a separate government-to-government process. The Ministry is also engaging directly with companies with utility infrastructure on and adjacent to the bridge.

## THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

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**Phase 1 Engagement**, October and November 2021: In Phase 1, the Ministry invited input on the concerns and needs for a long-term solution for the Taylor Bridge. The input received informed the development of five concepts presented in Phase 2.

**Phase 2 Engagement**, August and September 2022: Building on Phase 1, this report provides a high-level summary of the findings of Phase 2. The purpose of Phase 2 was to gather public and stakeholder input on the five concepts. The concepts were presented, and feedback was solicited through an online community survey, a Bridge User Group workshop, six stakeholder meetings, an open house at Peace Island Park, and written submissions.

### PHASE 2: ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



1,006  
Visits to the project  
website



272  
Survey  
responses



1,097  
Visits to the  
StoryMap



100+  
Visitors to the Peace  
Island Park Open House



13  
Bridge User  
Group members



13  
Stakeholder  
meetings



## PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### WEBSITE

The Ministry developed a project-specific website for the Taylor Bridge engagement via its [govTogetherBC platform](#). The website launched on August 9, 2022, and received a total of 1,006 visits between August 9 and September 30, 2022.

### STORYMAP

The project website linked to the Taylor Bridge Project StoryMap. This interactive StoryMap allowed participants to scroll down a dynamic page and learn more about the project. The StoryMap was open from August 9 to September 30, 2022 and received a total of 1,097 visits.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

Between August 9 and September 30, 2022, the public and stakeholders completed 272 online surveys, sharing feedback on their priorities for the Taylor Bridge, providing input on the five concepts, and discussing the opportunities for active transportation.

### BRIDGE USER GROUP ONLINE WORKSHOP

The Bridge User Group reconvened in Phase 2 for a virtual workshop. The workshop included a presentation by the Ministry followed by detailed discussions on the five concepts. The Bridge User Group included representation from the following sectors:

- Heavy Haul Trucking Industry
- Forest Industry
- Agriculture Industry
- Oil and Gas Industry
- Road & Bridge Maintenance Contractors
- Municipal Governments
- Regional District

### PEACE ISLAND PARK OPEN HOUSE

The Ministry hosted an open house at the Peace Island Park boat launch on September 3, 2022 (Labour Day weekend) from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Recreation users, bridge users, and the public explored information about the project, timeline, and the concepts. In total, the open house welcomed over 100 visitors.

### STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Between August 9 and September 30, 2022, the Ministry met virtually with key stakeholders throughout the North Peace Region. Six meetings were facilitated by the Ministry. The following stakeholders were engaged in at least one of the six meetings:

- Fort St. John RCMP
- Fort St. John Fire Department
- District of Taylor Fire Department
- North Peace Search and Rescue
- Resource Municipalities Coalition
- Peace Country River Rats
- BC Hydro
- BC Trucking Association

### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

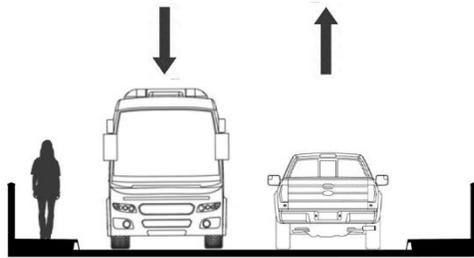
The Ministry invited individuals and organizations to submit written feedback between August 9 and September 30, 2022, either by email or direct mail. Within that timeframe, ten written submissions were received from several residents and bridge users.



## WHAT WE HEARD: CONCEPT 1

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### Concept 1: Maintain the Existing Bridge in Good Repair



#### COMMUNITY

##### *Delays and Congestion*

Engagement participants highlighted that fewer delays and less congestion would improve the driver experience. Minimizing the current wait times would improve the experience for community members who depend on the bridge for access to recreation, medical services, employment, and more.

##### *Long-Term Solution*

Engagement participants were concerned that this concept would not meet the long-term needs of the community. It was noted that money should not be spent on temporary fixes to Taylor Bridge as it is a key connection for the North Peace Region.

##### *Recreation*

The existing bridge contributes to significant noise levels at Peace Island Park for users and the surrounding community. This concept was not thought to minimize these noise levels.

#### RELIABILITY

##### *Delays and Congestion*

Many participants noted the necessity to accommodate daily travel needs and expressed that further scheduled maintenance would be disruptive. Delays have economic impacts and hinder growth and productivity, especially for staff and residents who commute across the bridge.

##### *Redundancy*

Participants commented on the lack of alternative routing when accidents occur, resulting in bridge closures and vehicles becoming cut off.

#### ECONOMIC GROWTH

##### *Wide and Heavy Loads*

Participants highlighted the importance of the bridge as a primary transportation route for moving goods, services, and people throughout northern communities. As industrial loads grow wider and heavier, the current infrastructure is perceived to create an economic bottleneck for the region. It hinders economic growth and investment for the Peace region, but also B.C. as a whole. Current processes for oversize vehicle crossings are not viewed as efficient as they require costly analyses.



## **SAFETY**

### ***Safety of the Bridge***

Participants identified safety issues with the bridge structure. Notable areas of concern included the age of the structure, the condition and material of the bridge deck, bridge rail height, and the effects of inclement weather on bridge materials.

### ***Emergency Response***

Ongoing bridge maintenance would continue to impact emergency response times. Additionally, emergency access through the bridge could be a concern during maintenance windows.

## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

### ***Infrastructure Improvements***

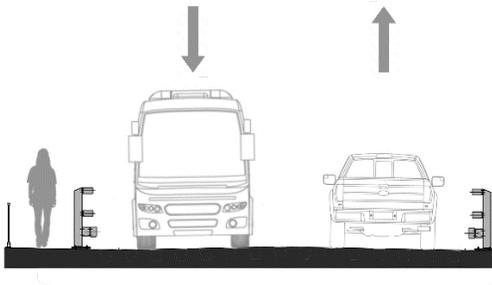
Respondents recognised a need for safer conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, as well as greater separation between vehicle traffic and other modes of transportation. Some participants noted that oversized and wide vehicles combined with a lack of barrier-separated pathway would not facilitate a productive or safe active transportation network.



## WHAT WE HEARD: CONCEPT 2

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### Concept 2: Extensively Renew the Existing Two-Lane Bridge



#### COMMUNITY

##### *Long-Term Solution*

Engagement participants highlighted the need for long-term infrastructure planning in the North Peace Region to ensure infrastructure meets the needs of future population growth and increased vehicle traffic. It was noted that a replacement would be a better long-term solution.

##### *Delays and Congestion*

There would be a small improvement to traffic flow, since regular maintenance closures would be reduced. However, similar to Concept 1 (base case), it is important to participants that maintenance delays are reduced for the community and the region.

#### RELIABILITY

##### *Construction*

Participants highlighted concerns regarding overnight construction, noting potential impacts to community services, residents, and workers in the region.

##### *Preference for Four Lanes*

Some respondents noted that more than two lanes are needed to address issues with traffic congestion and reliable route planning.

#### SAFETY

##### *Solid Deck*

There are concerns about wind loading/snow on the current bridge with a solid deck. The new solid deck would also require winter maintenance and improved drainage to prevent snow and ice hazards.

##### *Emergency Response*

Medical facilities and fire protection rely on overnight bridge access. Overnight construction would be disruptive. Considerations for emergency vehicle passage on the bridge during nightwork should be assessed, including alternative crossing routes and a comprehensive emergency traffic plan. Emergency responders use Peace Island Park to set up command posts and require access to the park through construction.

##### *Lighting*

Participants noted that lighting would have to be considered to increase use and safety.



## ECONOMIC GROWTH

### *Wide and Heavy Loads*

This concept would still experience issues supporting large weights and widths. As the province works to encourage lower- and zero-emission vehicles, it is expected that weights will continue to increase. A greater increase in load-carrying capacity is viewed as important for the future bridge. Participants indicated that it was important to plan for the longer-term to accommodate weights, along with increased movements of commercial vehicles and traffic overall.

### *Construction*

Respondents were concerned that the length of disruption due to construction would negatively impact industry and the community. Bridge closures during overnight hauls would result in more inventories being stored to keep them running during spring break up. This concept would only be feasible if there were a second bridge open during construction to minimize disruptions.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

Adding a barrier between vehicle traffic and the pedestrian pathway was noted to likely increase the safety for pedestrians. However, residents indicated potentially still avoiding walking or cycling on the bridge as there are safety concerns from high amounts of traffic and large vehicles.

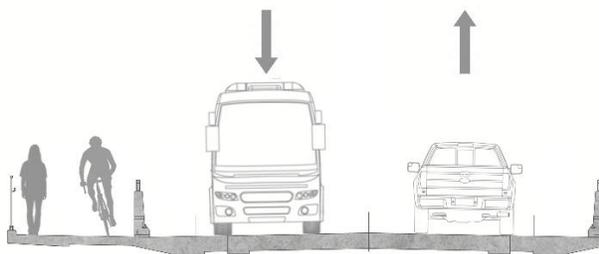
### *Active Transportation Crossings & Connections*

Eliminating the sidewalk from one side of the bridge would create challenges in addressing pedestrian and cycling crossings. This concept was not thought to significantly improve the active transportation system or connections to trails.

## WHAT WE HEARD: CONCEPT 3

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### Concept 3: Replace the Existing Bridge with a New Two-Lane Bridge



## COMMUNITY

### *Current and Future Traffic Needs*

Some participants noted that this concept addresses the needs of current vehicle traffic. However, others reiterated the need to meet the demands of regional vehicle traffic in the long term. The Ministry should also consider the potential for future four-laning through Taylor, as the bridge could become a bottleneck.



## RELIABILITY

### *Delays and Congestion*

A new bridge would require less maintenance and decrease delays, allowing for more reliable trip-planning.

### *Redundancy*

Respondents noted that this concept does not address concerns with access/redundancy in the region.

### *Construction*

Offline construction would result in less interruption during construction for bridge users (including emergency response).

## SAFETY

### *Safety of the Bridge*

Safety would be improved for drivers with a new bridge deck material and wider lanes. However, some participants expressed the desire for a physical barrier to divide oncoming traffic. A new structure would be built to higher safety standards which addresses current safety concerns associated with the ageing structure. A new bridge could also have the potential to better withstand the northern climates (snow, ice, wind, rain).

### *Emergency Response*

Participants noted the need for more lanes to address bridge closures in case of emergencies.

### *Traffic Speeds*

This concept could cause an increase in traffic speeds. Cameras on the bridge approaches could be beneficial in monitoring speeds .

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

### *Wide and Heavy Loads*

Participants acknowledged that the concept would be an improvement over existing conditions but highlighted the needs of oversized transport vehicles and increased industry and vehicle traffic to support economic growth.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

This concept would enable safe pedestrian passage of the bridge by addressing needs for separation between active transportation users and vehicle traffic. High quality pedestrian barriers (between pedestrians and traffic, and between pedestrians and the water) were also mentioned.

### *Bridge Approaches*

Changes to approaches could help better delineate the sidewalks to Peace Island Park.

## ENVIRONMENT

A new bridge could improve overall sustainability, with fewer closures and less idling.

## OTHER

### *Utilities*

A new bridge could pose challenges to the utility services that currently exist under the structure.



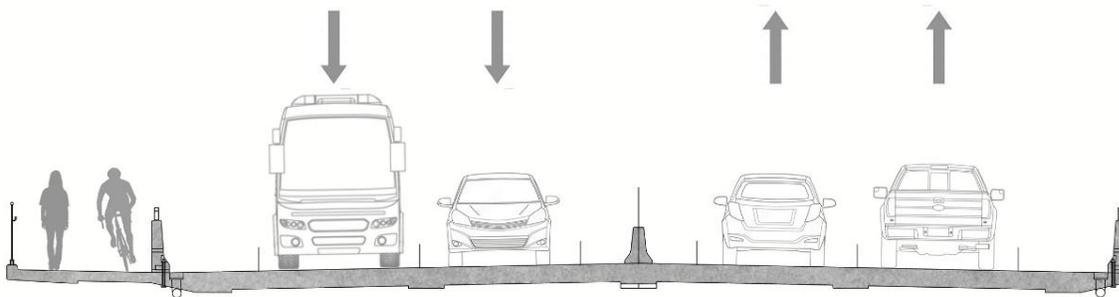
### Costs

There are concerns about the potential costs of a new bridge. However, other comments expressed that the cost would be worth the improvements to safety and reliability. Being able to use the existing infrastructure while constructing the new infrastructure would minimize impacts and result in cost savings.

## WHAT WE HEARD: CONCEPT 4

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### Concept 4: Replace the Existing Bridge with a New Four-Lane Bridge



### SAFETY

#### *Safety of the Bridge*

Benefits include a solid bridge deck, reduced conflict from oversized loads, access for emergency vehicles, lower risk of head-on collisions, and improved traffic flow.

#### *Worker Safety Improvements*

Participants noted this concept would offer improvements to worker safety, offering better conditions for maintenance.

#### *Emergency Response*

Four lanes would support emergency response by allowing an alternate lane for traffic if needed. A moveable median barrier could be considered, as it would be beneficial for emergency response situations.

#### *Bridge Approaches*

This concept would require a better understanding of changes to the highway on the north and south approaches to accommodate four lanes.

### COMMUNITY

#### *Community Improvements*

Participants stated that this concept would meet the current and anticipated needs of the region, with safety improvements enabling better year-round use by vehicles.

#### *Long-Term Solution*

This concept would provide a suitable long-term solution for the region for any foreseeable traffic goal scenario.



### ***Impacts to Recreation***

A four-lane bridge could potentially encroach on important park lands and impact the boat launch. Ideally, there would still be access to the river and the ability to navigate around the piers while a new bridge is being built. Participants noted that the annual jet boat races and other events would possibly need to be postponed during construction. However, the inclusion of a separated active transportation lane could improve access to Peace Island Park overall.

### ***Timelines***

There are concerns with potential timelines for a new four-lane structure, with participants emphasizing that it is important to build a solution to the Taylor Bridge as soon as possible.

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### ***Wide and Heavy Loads***

This concept would support industrial growth in the region by accommodating heavier and wider loads. It would improve the goods movement system across the province by removing a bottleneck from the north/south routes.

### ***Industry Growth***

Participants identified this concept as the most appealing option for planning for economic growth and accommodating the needs of oversized industry transport vehicles.

### ***Removable Barrier***

Removing the centerline barrier would have the potential to be costly and inefficient in the case of an increased rate of overload permits.

## **RELIABILITY**

### ***Delays and Congestion***

Participants highlighted that this concept would guarantee the long-term reliability of the route by facilitating consistent vehicle travel and minimal maintenance delays. Four lanes would also be needed for consistency with the potential four-laning of the District of Taylor to avoid the bridge becoming a bottleneck.

### ***Construction***

There are concerns over route delays during construction and potential impacts to vehicle traffic.

## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

### ***Safety Improvements***

Respondents commented that there would be increased safety of pedestrians and cyclists due to user separation. Better railings and wider lanes were also mentioned in support of user safety.



## ENVIRONMENT

### *Bridge Footprint*

Some participants highlighted that this concept would have a larger environmental impact than other concepts. Others noted that this concept would reduce the overall bridge footprint and accommodate transit. Additionally, participants noted that new bridges can be built to be more sustainable. Less land would be required to build this concept, when compared to Concept 5 (twinning).

## OTHER

### *Costs*

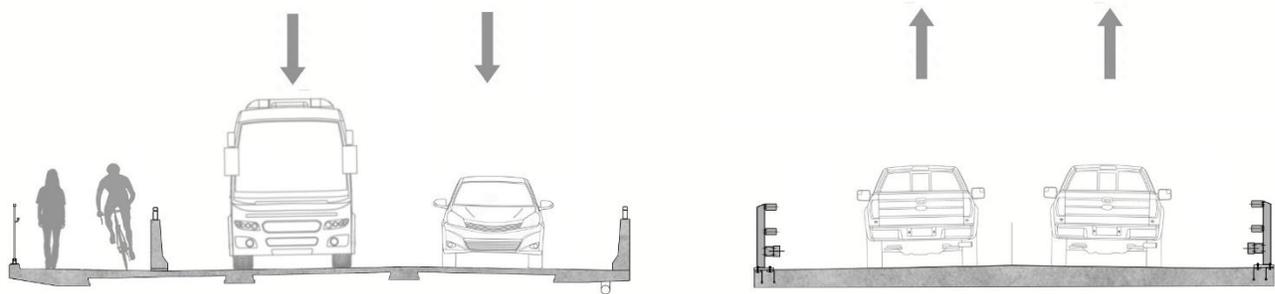
There were concerns that this concept might incur greater costs and be less successful at acquiring government funding to support construction. Additionally, some participants stated that based on current traffic levels, a four-lane replacement would not be needed for the region, and it would make more sense financially to consider two lanes.



## WHAT WE HEARD: CONCEPT 5

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### Concept 5: Renew the existing bridge and add a new two-lane bridge



#### SAFETY

##### *Emergency Response*

This concept addresses outstanding issues including the need for an emergency access lane. In the event of an evacuation for the region, the second bridge would allow for safe north-south passage.

##### *Safety Concerns with the Old Structure*

Participants remain concerned with the safety and integrity of the old structure. Significant safety improvements would still be required to ensure that it can withstand growing traffic and industrial loads. There could also be confusion based on the different load capacities and widths for each of the bridges, which could put the infrastructure at risk.

#### RELIABILITY

##### *Construction*

The concept would reduce impacts from construction delays as the existing bridge could be used in the interim while a new bridge was constructed. Being able to keep the bridge operational during construction would be beneficial for maintaining current rates of industrial traffic.

##### *Redundancy*

This concept would have the benefit of redundancy; as having two bridges would make the route resistant to closure from events affecting one of the two bridges.

##### *Maintenance Delays with Old Structure*

There are concerns with the potential high costs of maintaining and repairing the old bridge structure. The current structure is not perceived to be safe and would likely continue to impact residents with delays, restrictions, and shutdowns.

#### COMMUNITY

##### *Noise*

This concept was thought by participants to reduce noise pollution for the local community and users of Peace Island Park through a solid bridge deck.



### *Timelines*

Some participants highlighted concerns with the doubling of timelines with construction needed for both structures.

### *Traffic*

This concept, along with Concept 4 (4-lane replacement), would address the future traffic projections for the region and would improve the flow of people and goods in and out of the region.

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### *Growth of Industry*

Participants highlighted the suitability of this concept for addressing the needs of industry both today and in the future, noting that it would allow for a constant flow of industrial traffic with reduced delays.

## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

### *Pedestrian Connections*

Having pedestrian connections on the westernmost side was noted by participants to be beneficial to connect to existing walking paths, as the east side does not have a path.

### *Safety Improvements*

There is support for the addition of a cyclist and pedestrian lane separated from vehicle traffic.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### *Waste Reduction*

Respondents shared that continuing to use the old bridge would cause less material waste than dismantling it. However, the larger bridge footprint would still affect fish habitat.

## **OTHER**

### *Costs*

Some participants preferred this concept over a new four-lane bridge as it could potentially be cheaper to construct. A few participants expressed concerns over the potential long-term costs of maintenance and repairs on the existing bridge.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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Public engagement, technical investigations, and consultations with Treaty 8 First Nations in the area are helping shape and refine the concepts presented to the public. Each concept is undergoing a Multiple Account Evaluation process, which includes safety, reliability, community impacts, economic growth potential, active transportation, environmental impacts, technical and financial considerations, and more, culminating in the project team presenting a concept plan for government consideration.

