



May 25, 2026

Highway 3 Hartley Creek Bridge #3207 Project Update

The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (the Ministry) recognizes that this project is not just about infrastructure; it is about people, families, and the day-to-day safety of those who live, work, and travel in the Highway 3 corridor. We understand that changes to these routes can create uncertainty, especially where residential neighbourhoods, active transportation, and highway through-traffic intersect.

The Highway 3 Hartley Creek project team has heard directly from local residents, the City of Fernie, and regional partners about the importance of maintaining safe, reliable travel. Safety remains the Ministry's top priority and is the foundation of all planning, design, and construction decisions.

Updated Construction Schedule

As with any major construction project, some disruption and delays are anticipated, and we appreciate the patience of all interested parties as planning progresses. The Ministry has updated the Highway 3 Hartley Creek bridge construction schedule, with tendering now anticipated for Summer 2026, detour preparation works planned for Fall 2026, and main bridge construction targeted to begin in Spring 2027.

This revised timeline reflects project-related scheduling considerations and allows both the Ministry and the successful contractor to make full use of the 2027 construction season. It also provides additional time to advance detailed planning, coordination, and approvals related to traffic management, environmental protection, and construction safety.

In parallel, the adjusted schedule creates an opportunity for the Ministry to continue engaging with the local community, provide updates, and refine elements such as the Dicken Road detouring plan in collaboration with impacted parties.

The Ministry remains committed to ongoing dialogue with the community as the project moves forward.

Project Overview

The existing Hartley Creek crossing has experienced ongoing sedimentation and debris issues, leading to multiple emergency response efforts over several years. Despite numerous operational interventions by the Ministry, these concerns have persisted. After reviewing options and evaluating long-term solutions, the Ministry is moving forward with replacement of the current Highway 3 culvert with a bridge structure to provide a more reliable, resilient, and safe highway crossing.

We understand the concerns of residents and businesses around diverting Highway 3 traffic onto Dicken Road. This decision to utilize Dicken Road as the detour route was not made lightly. Dicken Road is the historic alignment of Highway 3 and has been used previously as a detour during highway closures. To confirm its suitability for use as a detour for this project, updated traffic data was collected and analyzed in mid-June 2025, representative of summer traffic conditions in the Fernie and Crowsnest Pass corridor.

The traffic analysis confirms that Dicken Road can accommodate Highway 3 detour traffic during peak summer conditions, including elevated seasonal traffic, with acceptable operations achieved when appropriate traffic control measures are implemented.

The modelling additionally measured the level of service (LOS) at intersections, a Ministry measure which provides an indication of the quality of traffic operations based on the delay experienced by vehicles. For the detour, the modelling and analysis indicated high-density but stable traffic flow conditions with estimated delays between approximately 25 and 35 seconds per vehicle. While delays at this level are noticeable to drivers, operations remain stable and within tolerable limits.

The Ministry recognizes that Dicken Road is a residential road and is not intended to function as a permanent highway route. This has informed how the detour is being planned and managed.

A temporary detour bridge on Highway 3 was assessed; however, it was not recommended due to several technical, environmental, and community related considerations, including:

- Environmental considerations, including potential effects on riparian areas, wildlife, and vegetation
- Impacts to adjacent private properties

- Long-term community benefits associated with improving Dicken Road (prior to, during, and following construction) as outlined below in this document. Money spent on a temporary bridge and detour would have no lasting impact. Funding improvements for Dicken Road ensure funds stay in the community and provide a lasting upgrade to the roadway
- A temporary detour bridge would similarly be expected to experience traffic delays due to reduced speeds, temporary alignment constraints, and traffic control requirements typically associated with temporary bridge crossings. In addition, Highway 3 traffic may choose to detour onto Dicken Road if a detour bridge results in slower travel speeds on the highway, potentially increasing traffic volumes on the local road network without traffic control measures
- Availability of a feasible local detour capable of accommodating Highway 3 traffic

Based on detailed traffic analysis and engineering review, Dicken Road was identified as the only available local route capable of safely accommodating all Highway 3 traffic, including passenger vehicles, commercial trucks, and emergency services. While cost considerations are an important component of the decision-making process, they are not the sole determining factor. The cost savings associated with using Dicken Road as a detour provide an opportunity to reinvest in improvements to Dicken Road, thereby enhancing overall network performance and supporting local accessibility.

To support safe travel during the detour, the Ministry is planning a range of safety measures and improvements, including:

- Prior to construction: gravel shoulders within the Ministry right-of-way on Dicken Road will be widened to support multimodal users and provide emergency egress, and brushing and vegetation management will be completed to improve sightlines and roadside safety
- During construction (detour period): a 50 km/h speed zone will be in effect, supported by temporary signage to maintain local detours and business access. Additional measures will include designated no-passing zones with double solid center lines, enhanced signage, speed reader boards, stop sign adjustments to prioritize high-volume movements, and increased enforcement, supporting overall safety and traffic flow, while facilitating access for emergency vehicles as needed. For pedestrians and cyclists, the construction contract requires that mobility be maintained throughout

construction using reduced speeds, signage, traffic controls, and physical separation where required, in accordance with Ministry standards.

- Post-construction: Dicken Road will be fully repaved, and new line painting will be installed throughout, delivering improved driving conditions and long-term safety benefits

Once the bridge construction project is awarded and construction preparation begins, the Ministry will share information with the public through local media and DriveBC. The successful contractor will be required to develop a Traffic Management Plan for Ministry approval, including a communications plan for residents, businesses, key interested parties and the travelling public.

All traffic management for this project must comply with WorkSafeBC regulations, Ministry of Transportation and Transit standards, applicable traffic engineering approvals, and District road authority requirements. These requirements are mandatory.

Ministry standards include the following:

- The construction contract will require the contractor to design their Traffic Management Plan during construction in accordance with the Traffic Management Manual for Work on Roadways (TMM), which provides requirements for detour speed, minimum width and safety control, special provisions unique to the project and WorkSafeBC's regulations.
- The Traffic Management Plan shall be signed and sealed by a Professional Engineer, licensed to practice in the Province of British Columbia, qualified and experienced in traffic management planning and highway safety.
- The contractor's Traffic Management Plan includes a risk assessment, incident management plan and other components, such as the need to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.
- The contractor cannot begin works until the Ministry has accepted the Traffic Management Plan.
- The contractor will be required to monitor and adjust detour conditions consistent with the Ministry Traffic Management Manual for Work on Roadways (2020), which establishes that traffic management plans are dynamic and must be regularly reviewed and modified to reflect changing site conditions and traffic operations.



A project email inbox has been set up and will be monitored by the project team so the public can ask questions or raise concerns. Please direct any inquiries to: H3.Hartley@gov.bc.ca

Contact information for the contractor will also be posted on project signage once construction begins.

We appreciate the community's input and understanding as we move forward with this important safety improvement project. The Ministry remains committed to working with residents and interested parties to minimize impacts while delivering long-term benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Desaulniers".

Joel Desaulniers
(Consultant) Project Manager