



Public & Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Summer 2022





Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

310-1500 Woolridge, Coquitlam, BC, V3K 0B8



engage.gov.bc.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

1	OVERVIEW	1
	ABOUT THE PROJECT	1
	PROJECT AREA	2
2	ENGAGEMENT PROCESS	3
	PURPOSE, GOALS, PRINCIPLES, & OUTCOMES.	3
	AUDIENCES	4
	HOW WAS THE PUBLIC ENGAGED?	5
	HOW WAS INPUT RECEIVED?	6
	WHAT WE ASKED	7
3	WHAT WE HEARD (PUBLIC FEEDBACK FORM)	8
	ABOUT PARTICIPANTS	8
	DESIGN DIRECTIONS	11
	SPECIFIC CONCERNS	16
	IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION	18
4	WHAT WE HEARD (STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT)	19
5	NEXT STEPS	20

DESIGN UPDATE (SEPARATE DOCUMENT)

DESIGN UPDATE 2022 (Supplement to Engagement Summary)



OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE PROJECT



Traffic congestion on Highway 7 between 266th Street and 287th Street in Maple Ridge has been identified as a growing concern. With one travel lane in each direction, commercial and industrial vehicles are experiencing delays, while commuters are spending more time in traffic and less time with their families. With over 24,0001 vehicles traveling on Highway 7 each day, safety is also a concern on this busy corridor. Along with being an important community link, the route is well-used for tourism, business activities, and movement of goods related to port and rail. Investing in infrastructure upgrades is important to help increase highway safety, capacity, reliability, and efficiency between the communities of Maple Ridge and Mission and beyond.

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (Ministry) is proposing a design to upgrade this fourkilometre segment of highway — the last remaining undivided two-lane section of Highway 7 between Maple Ridge and Mission — to four lanes. Improvements are also proposed to include the installation of a new centre median barrier on the existing four-lane highway from 266th Street to Spilsbury Road.

Upgrades are intended to alleviate issues and provide an improved transportation route for highway users traveling to work, school, home, or to other areas in the region; connect communities; and improve BC's economy which is reliant on a safe, efficient transportation system.

Engaging with businesses and industries; neighbourhood and community groups; environmental organizations; local Indigenous communities; CP Rail; other local, provincial, and federal government organizations; key agencies, transportation and mobility groups; active transportation groups; as well as the public, is an integral part of the process. Throughout the design development process it has been important to balance the needs of all involved and to work within the constraints of the project.

This document summarizes what we heard through the public engagement process. Public input, along with ongoing stakeholder engagement and input, further technical studies, and cost considerations, was considered during the design process towards creation of a final design for business case development and funding approval. Construction will commence in Fall 2022. Public consultation will continue during the construction process.

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure, 2019.

OVERVIEW

PROJECT AREA

The project is located on Highway 7 between 266th Street and 287th Street in the City of Maple Ridge.



Key Improvements

- ▶ Widening the highway from two lanes to four lanes between 266th Street and 287th Street
- ▶ Installation of a new centre median barrier on the existing four-lane highway from west of Spilsbury Road to 266th Street
- ▶ Highway shoulders widened to 2.0 m in both directions along the segment for active transportation
- ▶ Two strategically located vehicle turnarounds to maintain safe and efficient access along the corridor:
 - » West turnaround at River Road South (original design directions showed this at River Road / 272nd Street, but this was revised through the process)
 - » East turnaround at 287th Street
- ▶ Intersection improvements for three signalized intersections at River Road North / 272nd Street, 280th Street, and 287th Street, along with a new signalized intersection at River Road South (west turnaround), west of 266th Street

Design Considerations

This segment of highway faces multiple constraints for highway infrastructure development including the adjacent CP rail line; Whonnock, York, and Potter Creeks and environmental considerations; steep slopes and other ground conditions; nearby utilities including BC Hydro infrastructure; private properties; and Kwantlen First Nation land.

Design development has also considered maintaining access for local business, commercial, and industrial operations, emergency services, and transportation routes; meeting municipal and regional goals and objectives; and understanding community and interest group needs and desires. Balancing these considerations has been a key focus during design development.

ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

The purpose of the public engagement process was to gather meaningful input for consideration during further design refinement as the Ministry worked towards a 100% design stage.

At the stage of the public engagement process in early 2021, the project had been advanced to a 50% detailed design stage. This means that the design was sufficiently detailed to determine that it could be built, that it would work within the site, and that it would meet project objectives, understanding that engagement input would be considered during further design development and refinement.

Engaging with the local and regional governments, Indigenous communities, stakeholders, interest groups, and community members was important to helping shape the proposed design.

ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Key goals and objectives for engagement included:

- ▶ Building awareness about the project including project goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes;
- ► Encouraging participation in the process to understand public perspectives about the proposed design so that refinements could be identified and incorporated;
- ► Seeking input from a diverse range of participants including local residents, commuters, stakeholders, interest groups, and local Indigenous communities while building relationships within the community; and
- ► Sharing back to participants what was heard during the engagement process and next steps in the process.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Our approach to engagement aligned with the following guiding principles:

- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Consistency
- ► Convenience/Accessibility
- Inclusiveness
- Responsiveness
- ► Collaboration

OUTCOMES

Since the public engagement process in early 2021, the Ministry considered input from the public and from ongoing engagement with various stakeholders and groups who have an interest in the project. The Ministry also completed further technical and cost analysis to work towards a final design. Throughout that process, there were refinements to the design to ensure it meets the project objectives and community needs. With these refinements, the final (100%) detailed design has improvements from the 50% detailed design presented during the engagement process. The refined design has received funding approval and will proceed to the next steps of development.



Design Update

To learn more about the final (100%) design for this Highway 7 segment and how input was considered, please read the accompanying Design Update 2022.

AUDIENCES

The engagement process involved a diverse range of participants.

- ▶ The public engagement process focused on engaging a broad audience that included users and neighbours of Highway 7.
- ► Stakeholder and interest group engagement has been ongoing throughout the project duration with key meetings occurring in summer/fall 2020 and update meetings in spring 2021, fall 2021, and winter 2022.
- ► The Ministry has engaged local Indigenous communities through a separate, parallel process.
- ▶ The Ministry has also been coordinating with other levels of government, government agencies, and industry stakeholders throughout the process including Metro Vancouver, TransLink, CP Rail, BC Hydro, and City of Maple Ridge on both technical and policy related considerations.

Public and stakeholder feedback is the focus of this summary.





Engaging During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how unexpected shifts can happen and the significant impacts these shifts can have on our communities. Public engagement for the project was online to adhere to physical distancing guidelines in place at the time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout engagement, a key consideration has been to continue to meet engagement goals, using approaches that follow current health guidelines.

From Jan. 12 to Feb. 19, 2021, the Ministry engaged the public to welcome feedback on the proposed design. The public engagement process followed a stakeholder engagement process that occurred between summer/fall 2020 and winter 2022. Engagement with technical stakeholders and interest groups has been ongoing since the project commenced in fall 2019.

HOW WAS THE PUBLIC ENGAGED?





2,028 site visits on the project webpage between Jan 12 and Feb 19



Facebook posts @TranBC



Tweets @TranBC



4 email notifications (stakeholders and Project subscribers)



351 downloads of the Discussion Guide



2 media releases (Feb. 2021 and Apr. 2022)



2 different locations for digital billboard along the corridor



7 news articles in various publications (Jan. & Feb. 2021)



Various phone & email communication through the Project mailbox



Stakeholder letter (e.g., to local government)



Project Website: engage.gov.bc.ca/highway7widening266-287



Billboard Advertisement: At two locations along Highway 7 - Albion and Whonnock



Social Media Posts: @TranBC Twitter and Facebook



E-Notifications: To Project subscribers, stakeholders and interest group key contacts

Examples of Outreach Tools

The public engagement process focused on gathering input on the proposed detailed design for the Highway 7 segment. As engagement was online, input was received through the online public feedback form and through email or phone communication during the engagement period.

HOW WAS INPUT RECEIVED?





Discussion Guide outlining project information including project overview, process, key issues on the segment, design considerations, proposed design, and next steps.



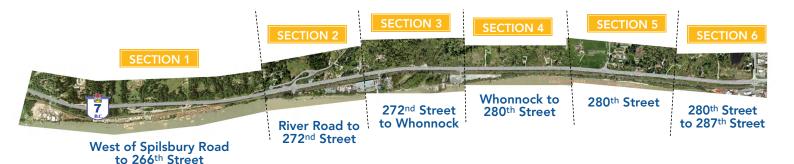
Public Feedback Form to gather input, comments, and questions about the proposed design.

> Examples of **Engagement Materials**

WHAT WE ASKED

At the 50% detailed design stage, we asked public participants the following questions:

- ▶ ABOUT YOU: Age range, how participants use Highway 7, frequency and type of travel on Highway 7
- **DESIGN DIRECTIONS:** Input on the 50% design focusing on the following key segments of Highway 7 including:
 - » SECTION 1: West of Spilsbury Road to 266th Street River Road South business/industrial access
 - » SECTION 2: River Road to 272nd Street Original proposed west turnaround, local businesses including Canada Post
 - » SECTION 3: 272nd Street to Whonnock Kwantlen First Nation IR #1 land, York and Whonnock Creeks
 - » SECTION 4: Whonnock to 280th Street Kwantlen First Nation IR #1 land and private properties
 - » SECTION 5: 280th Street Existing transit stop
 - » SECTION6: 280th Street to 287th Street Proposed east turnaround, BC Hydro transmission tower, and access to Ruskin / Fraser Industrial lands)



- ▶ SPECIFIC CONCERNS: Concerns about any specific location along Highway 7 between 266th and 287th Street
- ▶ IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION: Ideas participants could offer for consideration during design development

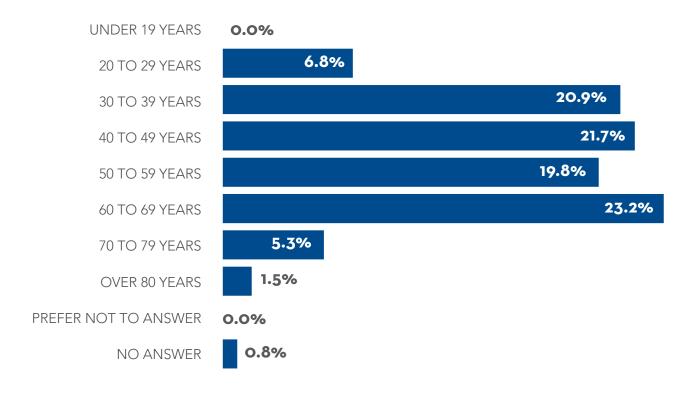
A summary of findings is detailed on the following pages. Since we engaged with the public at the 50% detailed design stage, the design has undergone refinements towards a final design based on public input, further technical analysis, and additional stakeholder consultation. To learn more about the current design, please review our Design Update 2022.

WHAT WE HEARD Public Feedback Form

This section summarizes what we heard through the online public feedback form. The feedback form included three sections: About You, Design Directions, and General Comments. The Ministry received 263 completed response forms.

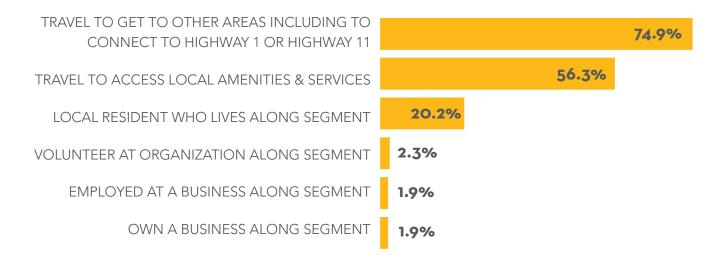
ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

Question 1: Age Range of Participants



Question 2: Participant Relationship to Highway 7 Segment*

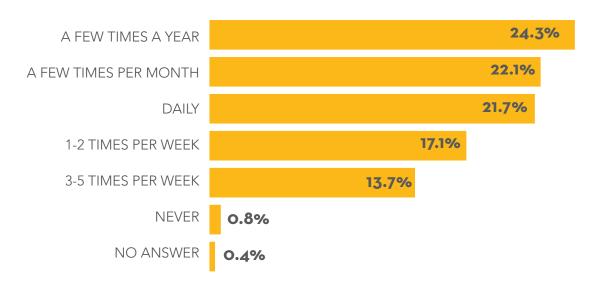
*Segment is between 266th Street and 287th Street and from 266th Street to Spilsbury Road.



Participants could select more than one option for their relationship to the Highway 7 segment.

Question 3: Frequency of Travel on Highway 7 Segment*

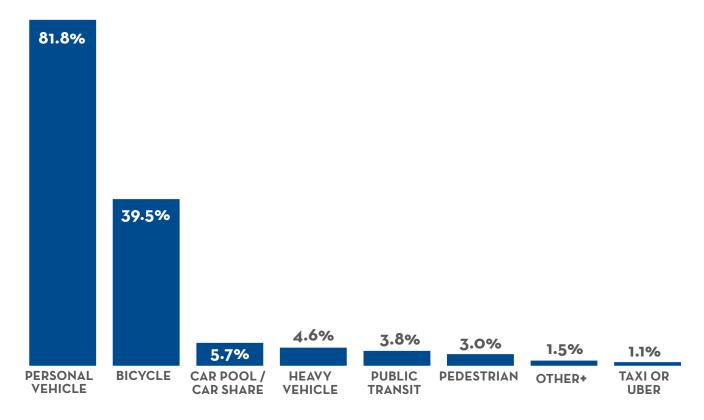
*Segment is between 266th Street and 287th Street and from 266th Street to Spilsbury Road.



The COVID-19 pandemic may have shifted responses slightly as many people traveled less frequently during the pandemic.

Question 4: Typical Mode of Travel on Highway 7 Segment*

*Segment is between 266th Street and 287th Street and from 266th Street to Spilsbury Road.



+OTHER MODES INCLUDED: WORK TRUCK, RIDES FROM OTHERS, AMBULANCE

Participants could select more than one option for their typical mode travel which is why results exceed a total of 100%.

Key Insights

- » Many people who use the segment between 266th Street to 287th Street use the corridor to travel between communities (74.9%) or to access local amenities and services (56.3%) along the corridor
- » Local residents who live along the corridor represented 20.2% of feedback form participants. The area is mainly low-density rural residential.
- » The COVID-19 pandemic likely shifted travel patterns.
- » A total of 81.8% of highway users use a personal vehicle to travel on Highway 7 although results indicated a number of users also report cycling along the route.

DESIGN DIRECTIONS



The following pages provide a summary of feedback we received on the early design directions. We asked whether or not people support early design direction and to provide comments.

Summary of Findings

Participants were asked how well the proposed design meets the design considerations for the project. Overall, there was general agreement that the proposed design meets these considerations.

- ▶ 69.5% of people either agree or strongly agree that traffic flow is improved with the proposed design.
- Several comments indicated a sense of urgency to complete the project to alleviate current safety, capacity, reliability, and efficiency concerns.
- ▶ Over half of participants (50.9%) agree or strongly agree with the proposed design. The key theme for participants who selected disagree was a feeling that active transportation safety would not be sufficiently improved.
- ► Over half of participants (50.6%) agree or strongly agree that the design would support accessibility improvements.

- ▶ A theme in the comments suggested consideration for a separated or protected cycling lane along the corridor to increase cyclist comfort and safety.
- Results also indicated some uncertainty around environmental impacts, with public concerns related to greenhouse gas emissions caused by vehicle emissions. Some participants suggested more sustainable modes of transportation would help support climate change initiatives and help mitigate congestion.
- Participants encouraged careful planning and development to protect existing environmental values within the project area.

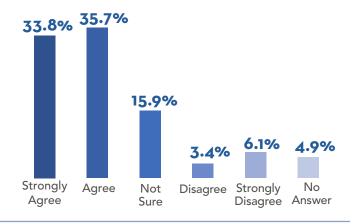
DESIGN DIRECTIONS

Question 5: How strongly do you agree or disagree that the proposed design generally meets the design considerations?



Improves Traffic Flow

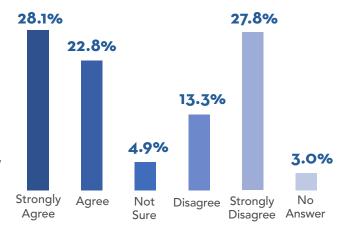
- » Widening the highway from 2 to 4 lanes will improve traffic flow and highway reliability and efficiency
- » Improved intersections that include better access to and from Highway 7 will better handle traffic volume
- » Turnarounds at either end of the project will reduce heavy truck movements on local roads





Enhances Safety

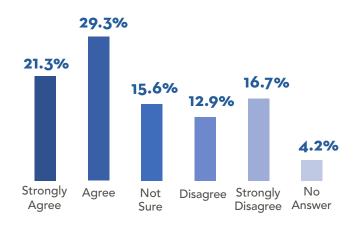
- » Installation of a centre median barrier between Spilsbury Road and 287th Street will reduce risk of vehicle cross-overs and collisions
- » Proposed changes including safer turnarounds, better highway access, and road geometry which will improve overall safety
- » The proposed design will coordinate with existing crossing controls at 272nd Street rail crossing to avoid vehicles occupying rail tracks





Maintains Accessibility

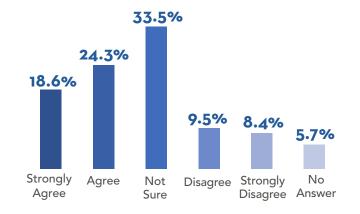
- » Access to local businesses along Highway 7 will be provided by gaps in the centre median barrier and turnarounds at either end of the project
- » The project team is coordinating with local business owners and the rail company to work through issues and opportunities while meeting design requirements
- » Connectivity to other roads around the project area is also being considered to meet general traffic management goals





Minimizes Environmental **Impacts**

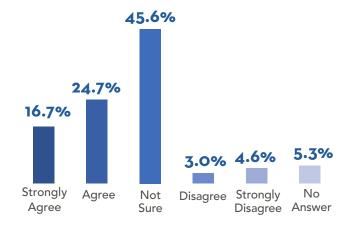
- » Three major streams are in the project area and the design focuses on avoiding, reducing, or mitigating environmental impacts to fish bearing streams
- » Opportunities for habitat enhancement have been identified
- » Proposed design improves efficiency which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles
- » All work will comply with environmental regulations and in consultation with stakeholders and local Indigenous groups





Minimizes Property Impacts

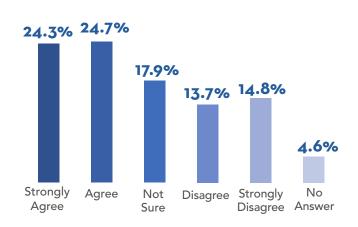
- » The project team is coordinating with Kwantlen First Nation, utility companies, CP Rail, and local residents to avoid or minimize property impacts
- » The design utilizes split grade road sections in key locations to work within project area constraints
- » There is no impact to existing heritage properties, and archaeological impacts are being managed





Provides Community **Improvements**

- » Turnarounds, including a three-legged roundabout at River Road, will help address safety issues and improve overall access
- » River Road will become a cul-de-sac for local traffic
- » Constructability is manageable with detours and minimal highway closures



Comments About Design Directions



Question 6: Would you like to explain any of your responses to Question 5 about how well you feel the proposed design meets the design considerations?

Participants were asked to provide any comments that supported their answer to Question 5.

Kev Themes

PROJECT SUPPORT

- ▶ General support for proposed design and highway improvements to enhance safety, accessibility, and efficiency
- Sense of urgency for project approval and completion of project

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

- Mixed feedback from participants about the adequacy of active transportation provision and whether this route is a priority for active transportation
- ► Key themes related to strengthening active transportation provision:
 - » Concern that the proposed 2.0 m shoulder lane would not sufficiently increase safety and comfort for cyclists / active transportation users on this route
 - » Concern that without protected routes for cycling / active transportation, goals around growing active transportation use are not supported
 - » Desire for project goals to prioritize active transportation at the same level as improving vehicle transportation
- Key themes related to concerns about increased active transportation provision:
 - » Suggestions that cycling facilities may not be a priority on this route due to costs required to build them, limited users, rural context, and lack of connections east/west and suggestions that alternate routes should be considered
 - » Concern that cycling lanes could impact safety for all highway users
 - » Suggestion that existing cycling infrastructure along Highway 7 is adequate

COORDINATION WITH REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- ▶ Desire for more coordination between Maple Ridge, Mission, and the Ministry to address limited active transportation connectivity in the region
- ▶ Desire for better access and connectivity to the Thornhill area located north of the highway.
- Suggestion to consider sewer service expansion for commercial and industrial areas at the same time as Highway 7 improvements for efficiencies

Key Themes Continued

- ► Concern about induced demand resulting from highway widening
- ▶ Suggestions that widening the highway in this location could lead to more people driving which could have congestion and community impacts in adjacent areas

MINISTRY POLICY & INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- ▶ Desire for more progress towards policy guidelines outlined in the Ministry's British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide and BC Climate Action Toolkit around providing active transportation on new and upgraded provincial highways
- ▶ General desire for more Ministry investment in active transportation facilities to support current trends, shifting attitudes, and newer technology for sustainable modes of transportation (e.g., e-bikes, better transit)
- ▶ Suggestions to shift project goals so that all modes of transportation are weighted equally

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

- ▶ General concern that highway improvements conflict with environmental/climate goals due to vehicles creating greenhouse gas emissions
- ▶ Concern about environmental impacts including wildlife corridors, fish habitats, and natural areas
- ▶ Concern about projected stormwater flows that may impact habitats and that it will be important that erosion and run-off be carefully managed during the construction process

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Concern about proposed concrete barriers affecting safety for cyclists / active transportation users
- ► Concern about drivers being able to quickly pull off the highway in the event of emergency suggestions for additional pull-outs
- ▶ Input that the design should carefully consider grade and speeds, proper turn lanes at the intersections, and heavy trucks at the 287th Street proposed turnaround
- ▶ Suggestions for more acceleration and deceleration lanes from intersections for trucks to gain enough speed to enter the highway
- ▶ Suggestions for more speed enforcement to improve safety
- ▶ Suggestions for increased maintenance to clean debris and grit along the proposed 2.0 m shoulder

ACCESS

Concern that travel time and access to private property could increase due to installation of barriers

SPECIFIC CONCERNS



Question 7: Do you have any specific concerns about the proposed design for any particular location?

Participants were asked to provide comments about specific locations in the project area.

Key Themes

- Suggestions for separated or protected infrastructure for active transportation users
- Suggestions for better road markings and signage at intersections to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians
- ► Suggestions for extended acceleration/deceleration lanes or access lanes to allow vehicles to safely access/exit the highway
- ► Concern about noise impacts related to increasing highway traffic
- Suggestions for fewer traffic lights along Highway 7 corridor to improve travel time

NATURAL AREAS

- ► Concern about potential environmental impacts to habitat areas and that these areas are mitigated appropriately
- Desire to ensure that highway construction activities carefully manage flood impacts, as well as long-term stormwater management considerations
- ► Concern about erosion around the BC Hydro tower / proposed retaining wall

BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL AREA ACCESS

- ▶ Concern about business/industrial area access and impacts due to centre barrier placement
- Concern about business/industrial area access related to steep grades, rail line, current road condition, and emergency vehicle access
- Desire to see access for businesses, commercial, and industrial operations maintained

Key Themes Continued

PROPOSED 272nd STREET TURNAROUND

- ► Concern about the steep grades around the proposed 272nd Street turnaround and how grades will be mitigated in the proposed configuration
- ▶ Concern about business impacts along River Road and 272nd Street businesses due to cul-de-sac; suggestions to include more commercial development in this area
- Concern about heavy equipment and trailers using the proposed cul-de-sac to access Byrnes Road
- ► Concern about potential increase of traffic up River Road with proposed roundabout at 272nd Street

PROPOSED 287th STREET TURNAROUND

- ► Concern about increased traffic at the 287th Street turnaround impacting local access
- Concern that highway widening could lead to further development in the community and zoning changes

IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION TO

Question 8: Do you have general comments you would like to share?

Key Themes

- Suggestions to consider electric vehicle (EV) or HOV priority lanes
- Consider connectivity to areas that will be developed in the future such as Thornhill
- ▶ Additional suggestions for separated or protected active transportation route
- ▶ Desire for flyover to connect to 272nd Street to eastbound traffic and a long merge lane for westbound traffic as a long-term / future consideration
- ▶ Improve highway entry/exits to enhance safety (will be addressed in next steps of detailed design development)
- ▶ Suggestions to enhance street lighting, reflectors, pavement markings, and rumble strips to improve visibility and safety (will be addressed in next steps of detailed design development)
- ▶ Interest in construction schedule and considerations to inform residents well ahead of time of construction activities
- ▶ Desire for noise and other impacts to be well managed during the construction process
- ▶ Desire for safer entering to the highway and exiting from the highway
- Suggestions to consider providing pull-out areas for emergency services or drivers to pull-out in the event of an emergency
- ▶ Suggestions to improve signage, especially for approaching intersections

WHAT WE HEARD Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with local stakeholders and interest groups occurred between summer/fall 2020 with initial engagement at the 50% detailed design and winter 2022 for updates on design development. Various meetings occurred between this time to engage with stakeholders to hear concerns and ideas for consideration during design development.



Stakeholders Participated



Stakeholder Meetings (in addition to technical/ policy stakeholder meetings)



Stakeholder / Interest Groups Engaged:

- » Local Businesses, Industries, Commercial
- » Transportation / Mobility Organizations
- » Neighbourhood / Community Groups
- » Local Institutions
- » Environmental Groups
- » Local Government & Agencies (e.g., City)
- » Technical Stakeholders (e.g., BC Hydro)

KEY THEMES

- **SUPPORT:** Belief that the design will address many of the current issues; will improve safety and efficiency for local businesses and the community; and aligns with priorities to support growth and local economic development.
- **ACCESS:** Concerns about maintaining access for local businesses, industries, and commercial operations for employees, delivery drivers, and customers with proposed installation of a centre median and preference for maintaining full movements at both intersections at River Road South loop.
- **SAFETY ISSUES (HIGHWAY): Concerns** about highway grades, poor sight lines, lighting, markings, and open ditches which can impact safety especially in poor weather conditions and with peak traffic congestion.
- ► SAFETY (RAIL CROSSINGS): Concerns about safety at at-grade rail crossings relating to large trucks blocking tracks while accessing the Highway and desire or signal coordination at 272nd Street (South).
- **ENTERING / EXITING HIGHWAY:** Concerns about safe access to and from the highway especially with heavy trucks, speed, and traffic congestion. Desire for acceleration/deceleration and left-turn lanes at key locations.
- **PROPOSED TURNAROUNDS:** Concerns about the footprints, costs, and proposed locations of both turnarounds due to grades, truck use, and concerns about sight lines and potential speeding.

- **EMERGENCY SERVICES:** Maintain access for emergency services and address concerns about water supply (hydrants) due to the nature of businesses that operate in the area (that are at risk for fire or injury).
- ► ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION: Concerns about adequacy of provisions for active transportation for safety, comfort, and connectivity. Suggestionse for protected cycling lanes along the corridor, highway speed reduction, and further intergovernmental collaboration for active transportation initiatives.
- POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL **IMPACTS:** Concerns about impacts to creeks, wetland areas, and trees along the corridor as well as potential Speciesat-Risk at key locations. Suggestions to consider habitat restoration, buffers, stormwater management to enhance local watersheds, and further investment in sustainability.
- POTENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD **IMPACTS:** Concerns about potential noise, light pollution, view impacts, and traffic that may impact nearby properties. Suggestions to consider noise mitigation, signal timing, and design refinements.
- ► POTENTIAL PROPERTY / **INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS:** Concerns about potential impacts to heritage properties; potential archaeological sites; existing infrastructure/utilities; and wells/ water quality during construction.

NEXT STEPS

The Ministry appreciates public interest and involvement in the Highway Widening from 266th Street and 287th Project. The project has now been refined to 100% detailed design for business case development and has received funding approval by the provincial Treasury Board. Construction will commence in Fall 2022.



Engagement with technical stakeholders and local Indigenous communities, including Kwantlen First Nation, occurred throughout the Project duration in a separate, parallel process to the public and stakeholder engagement.



Want to learn more about next steps for Highway 7?

To learn more about the final design for this Highway 7 segment, how public and stakeholder feedback was considered in the design update, and the next steps in the implementation process, please read the accompanying Highway 7 Design Update 2022.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!





