

Staff Report

Origin

The Government of Canada's National Trade Corridors Fund is a merit-based program designed to support studies and strategic infrastructure projects that help to address transportation bottlenecks, vulnerabilities and congestion along Canada's trade corridors. The \$4.2 billion in funding is spread over 11 years ending on March 31, 2028.

As part of the two-phase application process, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (the Ministry) submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to Transport Canada in March 2022 for the Moray Bridge Area Integrated Planning Study (the Study). The Study will assess options and strategies to improve road access between Sea Island and Highway 99 primarily along the corridors of Bridgeport Road and Sea Island Way, which in this area are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry. As the roads are located in Richmond, the City will be an active participant in the Study as well as the Vancouver Airport Authority (VAA).

Transport Canada has approved the EOI and the next phase is the submission of a more detailed Comprehensive Project Proposal by June 30, 2022. To strengthen the application, the Ministry is requesting a letter of support from the City.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #5 Sound Financial Management:

Accountable, transparent, and responsible financial management that supports the needs of the community into the future.

5.4 Work cooperatively and respectfully with all levels of government and stakeholders while advocating for the best interests of Richmond.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #7 A Supported Economic Sector:

Facilitate diversified economic growth through innovative and sustainable policies, practices and partnerships.

7.1 Demonstrate leadership through strategic partnerships, collaborations and exploring innovative and emerging economic practices and technical advancements.

Analysis

Study Overview

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will be conducting the Moray Bridge Area Integrated Planning Study and is requesting the City's participation. The impetus for the Study is the ageing Moray Channel Bridge owned by the Ministry, which was built in 1957 and has reached the end of its useful life. Opening the swing bridge for marine traffic results in

congestion and delays for eastbound road users and adds travel time to just-in-time cargo deliveries. Malfunctioning of the swing bridge equipment further undermines travel time reliability with adverse impacts to multi-modal traffic flow and goods movement. The bridge also has inadequate headroom for dike raising to address projected sea level rise as a result of climate change.

Together with the westbound Airport Connector Bridge, both bridges connect into a complex road network on both sides of the river. The City Centre Area Plan and the YVR 2037 Master Plan envision increased densification of land use in the vicinity of the bridgeheads. These developments have the potential to increase stress on the surrounding transportation and trade networks and impact the reliability and efficiency of goods and people movement.

Bridge replacement should not be undertaken in isolation and provides an opportunity for road reconfiguration and traffic management. A comprehensive transportation network study is needed to fully understand the impacts to the surrounding transportation network caused by the future land uses. The Study will assist the Ministry, the City and VAA to integrate the planning of infrastructure investments with current and future land use development to support the movement of people and goods and develop compact, complete, connected and resilient communities.

The approximate Study area is bounded by Highway 99 on the east, Grant McConachie Way on the west, River Road to the north, and Cambie Road to the south (Figure 1).

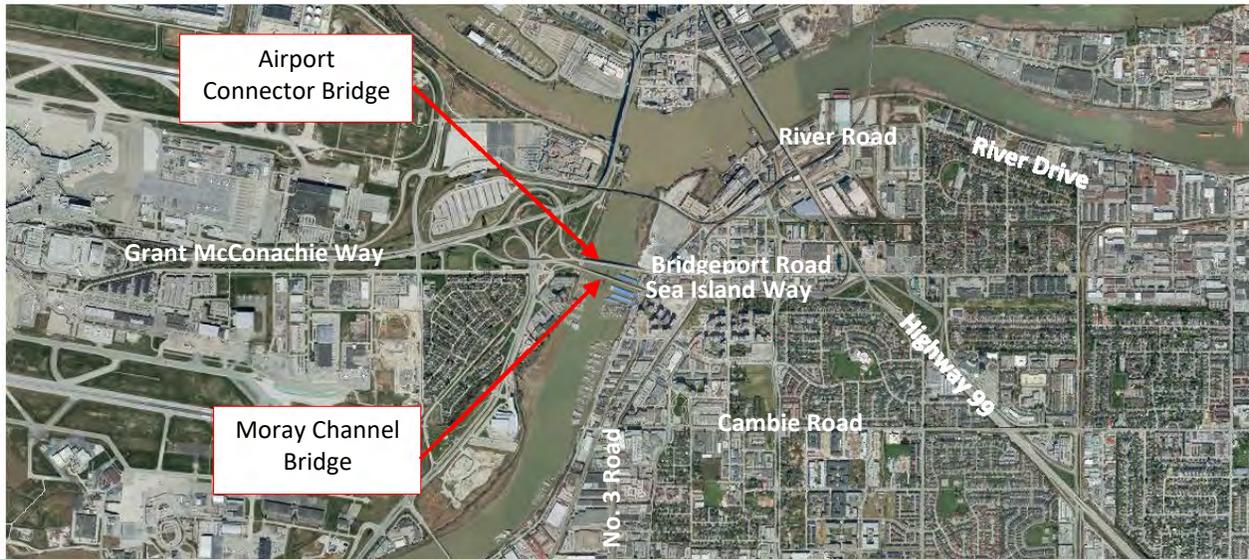


Figure 1: Study Area

Study Objectives

Supported by technical analysis, the Study will inform infrastructure planning, transportation investments and land development to enable integrated provincial, municipal and airport planning. The following project stages are planned:

- Assess existing and future conditions
- Develop performance metrics and an evaluation framework

- Develop options and strategies
- Identify how potential improvements can inform current and future transportation investments and land use development
- Identify the implications to existing and future planning for the area

Focus areas of the Study are improving goods movement/trade networks, sustainable transportation options (active transportation, transit), climate action, and resiliency. Preferred options and strategies will leverage transportation investments to deliver shared benefits including: strengthening the trade network; economic growth and innovation; complete, compact and sustainable development; livability; climate resiliency and GHG reductions. Ultimately, the Study will provide a strong technical and engineering foundation to inform a Ministry business case for infrastructure investments.

Opportunity to Advance City Objectives

The collaborative Study provides an opportunity for the City to work with partner agencies to develop mutually beneficial outcomes that complement and advance City objectives in the area. Key opportunities include:

- *Road Network*: Potential improvements to enhance road safety and optimize traffic operations such as selected road widening, intersection modifications, turning and access upgrades and transit improvements.
- *Flood Protection*: The future replacement of the Moray Channel Bridge to enable dike upgrades and raising in the vicinity of both bridges in accordance with the approved Dike Master Plan Phase 2 (North Dike from Terra Nova to No. 6 Road) and Phase 5 (Sea Island, Mitchell Island and Richmond Island).
- *Middle Arm Greenway*: Dike raising also provides an opportunity to provide a new segment of the Middle Arm Greenway under the approaches of the bridges on Lulu Island as well as upgrade the existing multi-use path under the approaches of the bridges on Sea Island.
- *Active Transportation Network*: Potential improvements to increase connectivity between Oak Street Bridge and YVR and to address the current barriers that Sea Island Way and Bridgeport Road present for the north-south travel of pedestrians and cyclists.
- *Area Development*: Consideration of infrastructure investments to support developments in the Study area, particularly large-scale proposals such as Duck Island and ongoing activity in Capstan Village.

Next Steps

The Ministry will submit the Comprehensive Project Proposal by June 30, 2022 and anticipates learning the outcome of the application by early fall 2022. If successful, the Fund will provide 50% cost-share funding. If not successful, the Ministry will still proceed with the Study but likely with a reduced scope. The Ministry anticipates that the Study will be completed by the end of 2023.

Financial Impact

None. Impacts of the Study to the City are limited to in-kind resources of staff time, technical input and the provision of data.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will be conducting the Moray Bridge Area Integrated Planning Study and is requesting the City's participation. The study uses the required replacement of the ageing Moray Channel Bridge as a catalyst for a comprehensive transportation network study to better integrate transportation and land use planning in the area. The City's participation in the Study can help leverage opportunities to advance City priorities. Staff recommend that the City provide a letter of support for the Ministry's application to the Government of Canada's National Trade Corridors Fund for consideration of cost-share funding for the Study.



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