Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

DATE: December 23, 2014 DRAFT

PREPARED FOR: Information

ISSUE: Rationale for a 10-lane vs. an eight-lane bridge

SUMMARY:

- **The George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project is an important investment in the province's future to enable a more reliable and efficient transportation network for commuters and the flow of goods through B.C., Canada and the Asia-Pacific Gateway.**
- **Concerns about safety, reliability and congestion at the Tunnel today are frustrating for everyone and are stalling the economy.**
- **The 10-lane bridge will meet current and forecast travel demand with no significant congestion to at least 2045. This includes traffic that currently uses the Tunnel, forecast traffic growth at this crossing, and the potential for some travellers who avoid the Tunnel today to switch to the new bridge. With dedicated transit/HOV lanes, it will encourage transit and carpooling to help manage growth in auto traffic over time.**
- **A new 10-lane bridge will increase the level of rush-hour service on Highway 99 by adding a dedicated transit/HOV lane in each direction and increasing the number of general-purpose traffic lanes in each direction from three to four, which will provide a separate lane for trucks and other slower-moving traffic as they navigate the grade of the new bridge (similar to the Alex Fraser Bridge), without compromising travel times for faster-moving traffic.**
- **The new bridge will significantly reduce congestion and improve travel times and reliability.**
- **The new bridge is expected to reduce crashes by at least 20 per cent, facilitate access for first responders and provide more room to keep traffic moving when incidents do occur.**

BACKGROUND:

- The Tunnel has been congested for decades during rush hour and is reaching midday capacity.
- A 10-lane bridge will meet current and future travel demand and significantly reduce congestion on Highway 99.
- Metro Vancouver's population, employment and economy are forecast to continue to grow by more than one million people over the next 30 years, and truck traffic is expected to more than double.
- With the counterflow system, the Tunnel already has three lanes in the peak direction during rush hour. The new bridge will add two lanes in each direction—one dedicated to transit/HOV and one for merging and slower-moving traffic such as trucks.
- The rationale for a 10-lane bridge is outlined in the Project Definition Report and includes traffic growth forecasts and expectations of operational performance.
    - Technical studies, including traffic analyses, were used to develop the Project scope.
- When comparing an eight-lane and 10-lane crossing, the 10-lane crossing was found to be superior because it will:
    - Significantly reduce congestion on opening day and accommodate traffic growth to at least 2045.
    - Significantly reduce crashes due to improvements in merging.
    - Provide space for slower-moving trucks as they navigate the grade of the new bridge (similar to that of the Alex Fraser Bridge), without compromising faster-moving traffic.
    - Relieve congestion on the Alex Fraser Bridge.

KEY ISSUES:

- Critics may question the rationale for building a 10-lane bridge as opposed to eight-lane bridge.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

- Both the Alex Fraser Bridge and the Port Mann Bridge have eight lanes, although Port Mann will increase to 10 lanes by end of 2014.
- Questions may arise about the potential effects of tolling on the new bridge, and whether it will cause a decline in traffic volumes.

Attachments (if applicable)

PREPARED BY:	**REVIEWED BY:**	**INITIALS:**
BN drafter's name, Title Branch (250) XXX-XXXX	First Name Last Name, Title Division First Name Last Name, Title Division	_____ _____

Page 3 to/à Page 8

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

NR