



STUCK IN TRAFFIC?

We have a choice.

Reckless spending or Sensible solutions?



Communities at a crossroads

The "Gateway" Mega-Project

THE B.C. "GATEWAY PROGRAM" provides the infrastructure for the Canadian government's "Pacific Gateway Strategy" which is an (estimated) \$7 billion federal government plan to increase trade with the Asia-Pacific region. The massive proposal includes new and expanded highways, bridges, rail yards, container terminals and port infrastructure to facilitate importing more goods made abroad and exporting more of B.C.'s non-renewable resources. Key features include:

- widening Highway 1 from Vancouver to Langley
- twinning the Port Mann bridge
- building a South Fraser Perimeter Road along the south side of the Fraser River from Highway 1 to Deltaport
- building a North Fraser Perimeter Road along the north shore of the Fraser, between the Queensborough Bridge and the Golden Ears Bridge
- tripling Delta's port capacity to accommodate three times more trucks to move container goods through the GVRD and beyond



by Joe Foy
Wilderness Committee, National Campaign Director

THANKS TO SOME GREAT DECISIONS

made by our leaders over time, the region south of the Fraser River in Metro Vancouver is one of the finest places on Earth to live.

We know that our communities face serious problems associated with fast growth and urbanization. The question is, can we carry on the tradition of good decision-making, and pass on the best of this place to future generations? I believe the answer is, yes we can – if we step up and do the right thing now.

Born in Langley, raised in Surrey, and now living in New Westminster, my life has spanned both sides of the Fraser River. I have witnessed first hand the rapid increase of cars and trucks that is clogging up our streets, polluting our air and water, and filling our lives with traffic noise. This is deeply troubling to me and I am sure to you too.

I believe that we are at a crossroads. What we decide in the next little while will determine the fate of our region for generations to come. It seems pretty clear to me that the so-called "Gateway Program" will lead to even more car traffic pouring through our neighborhoods, with more pollution, noise and traffic deaths (recent reports show that there are 3,000 deaths a year in Canada due to traffic accidents). Unfortunately, our provincial

government appears poised to take this deadly wrong turn.

Premier Gordon Campbell wants to spend billions of dollars on the Gateway Program to double the Port Mann Bridge, expand Highway 1 and supersize roads all over the region. He has suggested this will help "ease gridlock". If simply expanding highways was the solution to traffic

What we decide in the next little while will determine the fate of our region for generations to come...

problems, Los Angeles would be the model of perfection. Fact is, Highway expansion always worsens congestion in the long run.

But Premier Campbell also supports increased public transit – which is a hopeful sign. Our community needs to work together to convince our government to abandon the dead end freeway, bridge and road expansion plans. The sensible thing would be to take that multi - billion dollar savings and really beef up the public transit plans to adequate levels.

Anyway, that's the way I see it. Read on to see what other area residents think, and what we can do about it.

The B.C. Transit Plan — Taking a back seat to Gateway?

IN JANUARY 2008, the B.C. government announced a proposed \$14-billion public transit plan, to be completed theoretically by 2030.

Unfortunately the 2008 Budget includes \$621 million more for highway expansion than for transit. Only \$219 million was actually allocated for transit over 4 years, including \$21 million in this year's budget — only a fraction of the overall budget.

While the transit plan (if funded) is positive, it will not significantly reduce congestion south of the Fraser if Gateway goes ahead as planned. Furthermore, if we go ahead with Gateway, this will result in a drastic and irresponsible increase in climate changing greenhouse gases even with more transit available. Ultimately, government can either plan for car-dependent sprawl or it can plan for healthy communities. Transit planning is inextricably linked to land use planning. We need to make a choice: Transit must not take a back seat to Gateway.



Communities at a crossroads – We have a choice!

Cars threaten my family's safety



by Neena Keram-Prasad
Stay-at-home mom and small business owner, Surrey

WHEN YOU BECOME A PARENT, you notice things that perhaps you wouldn't have before, especially when it comes to the health and well-being of your family. A few years ago I probably wouldn't have given much thought about the number of cars on the road. But now that I see how they are affecting my children, I notice them more and more.

In the last three to four years there has been a large increase in the number of cars where we live. Along with them has come pollution and noise. I've stopped walking along 152nd St. or 100th Ave. with my children out of fear of the CO2 emissions they are directly exposed to. I'm also afraid to allow my kids to ride their bikes without me because there are so many speeding cars on the roads in my Guildford neighbourhood. I am worried that with more road expansion the problem will only get worse — not only for my children but also for my husband, who spends two hours a day driving to and from his work in Vancouver. We must demand measures to reduce the number of cars, by concentrating on more affordable and accessible rapid transit.

did you know?

Public transit is at least 30 times safer than automobile travel, as measured in deaths per mile traveled.

(Frumkin, Frank and Jackson. Urban Sprawl and Public Health 2004 p 110)

Our Wild Spaces in Peril



by Pamela Zevit
Conservation Biologist, Coquitlam

WHEN I MOVED TO THE COMO CREEK WATERSHED in south Coquitlam, I began to realize just what a Garden of Eden I had been blessed to live in.

In the fall I only have to walk a block to see salmon spawning — REAL WILD SALMON! They live nestled in secret places amongst the streams that ran through the multitude of subdivisions and warehouses in the big box nirvana that is my neighbourhood — and thanks to the tireless efforts of local conservationists, they are still there. But these streams are also bisected and trisected by roads, two highways and a railway — whose

contributions to the watershed include runoff carrying toxins like aromatic hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and winter road salt. In addition, these roads can form a deadly obstacle course for wildlife trying to hopscotch between green patches on opposite sides of the highway.

As a conservation biologist, I know that much of the damage this infrastructure has wrought on our wild spaces has already come to pass. But that does not justify making a bad situation worse.

The remaining wild places that would fall in the path of Gateway form a living tapestry that sustains us. Such wild places sustain our "Livable Region," and actually make that term mean something. They are what make the region livable, not just for us, but for the rich diversity of life with which we 'humans' share the region.

Once lost, these precious places can never be brought back.

A student's perspective



by Laura Anderson
4th Year Sciences Student, Kwantlen University College

STUDENTS NEED TRANSIT INVESTMENTS NOW! Buses to Kwantlen University College are few and far between. We don't even have a direct bus from the SkyTrain to the Surrey campus and the full bus regularly passes by people standing at bus stops. Environmental reasons aside, it's hard to find the money to keep a car on the road as a student, and many of us couldn't afford the proposed tolls for the new Port Mann bridge or the rising insurance costs and

fuel prices even if we wanted to pay for them. For many of us affordability is why we moved south of the Fraser to begin with. We wanted a better quality of life in a community we could afford. Building highways won't help us; better public transit will. If we make the wrong choices today, our kids are going to have to live with them. Isn't it time to stop placing today's burdens on the next generation?

did you know?

In B.C., "a \$1 million transit expenditure creates an average of 21.4 new jobs, compared to 7.5 jobs for the same automotive expenditure, or just 4.5 jobs in the petroleum industry".

jobs created by industry per every million dollars spent



source: www.cutaaactu.ca/sites/cutaaactu.ca/files/issue5.pdf



Brad Major
Fire Fighter, North Delta

"THE SOUTH FRASER PERIMETER ROAD (SFPR) is going to build a bridge over my house — no joke! My house is on

River Road in North Delta, in a splendid ravine with a fish-bearing stream running through it. Herons, coyotes, beaver and owls live here now. If the SFPR goes through, my home and this ravine will be destroyed by a four-lane truck highway."



Risa Wu
Formosa Organic Nursery, Pitt Meadows

"THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT has built a highway right through the organic blueberry fields that our family has cultivated for over 30 years. We must protect our agricultural lands; once the "gateway" has been opened, there is no going back."



Gordon Price
Director of The City Program, Simon Fraser University

"HERE'S A QUESTION I always ask when attending a transportation conference or forum: Can anyone give me an example — just one — of a place in North America that has successfully addressed congestion by building more roads and bridges, and that we in Metro Vancouver should be more like? I'm still waiting..."



John Vissers
Construction Sub-Contractor, Abbotsford

IF WE INVEST OUR money in smart urban planning and transit infrastructure, we can make our cities south of the Fraser

more independent and livable instead of making them a route for a highway to pass through. The proposed Gateway project will not enhance our long-term local economic stability. Rather, it will simply drive small businesses like mine out of town, choking local traffic while allowing jobs to flow through and out of our region.



Why building highways first won't get us out of the jam



by Stephen Rees
Transportation Economist, Richmond

THE PUBLIC CAN ONLY make transportation choices from what we have been offered. As residents of municipalities south of the Fraser, our options are still far too limited. The Province has just announced a \$14 billion transit plan, but they still insist that the multi-billion dollar Gateway highway-expansion mega-project is needed and will come first. This approach only digs us deeper into debt, without solving our traffic problem. In fact, the end result will be more cars and more congestion.

Any plan aimed at containing urban sprawl and rewarding green developments will not work unless it incorporates transit right from the start — not as a possible add-on later, which is the provincial government plan announced in the 2008 budget. There are many cost-effective solutions to peak hour congestion on the Port Mann Bridge that can be implemented right away, which have not been evaluated adequately. These include:

- express buses across the Port Mann Bridge between Surrey and Coquitlam, using "queue-jumper" express lanes.
- more SkyTrain cars travelling south of the Fraser
- "low-floor" diesel railcars (as used in Europe), run on existing low-use freight railway lines

for more details visit www.wildernesscommittee.org/gateway

We cannot afford to wait until after new roads have been built, bridges twinned and freeways widened to tackle our region's traffic problems. Developers are already buying up our land so that they can build more car-oriented sprawl in areas which have little or no transit provision. Without the provincial government making improved public transit their top priority the cycle can only worsen, and we will spend ever more hours stuck in traffic. We must provide reliable public transit to the fastest growing areas of the province NOW.

did you know?

"Widening and building new highways actually causes, not relieves, traffic congestion in Cincinnati and other major U.S. metropolitan areas. This study estimates that up to 43% of traffic in Greater Cincinnati is caused just by expanding the area's road network." (Summary of Noland and Cowart, "Analysis of Metropolitan Highway Capacity and the Growth in Vehicle Miles of Travel," presented to the U.S. Transportation Research Board, January 2000)



Gateway to Global Warming?

TODAY MORE AND MORE people are trying to do what they can to reduce their contribution to climate change but it's difficult without adequate public transit alternatives. If we make the wrong choices our tax money will be used to increase carbon emissions and speed up climate change. Our government has to lead the way.

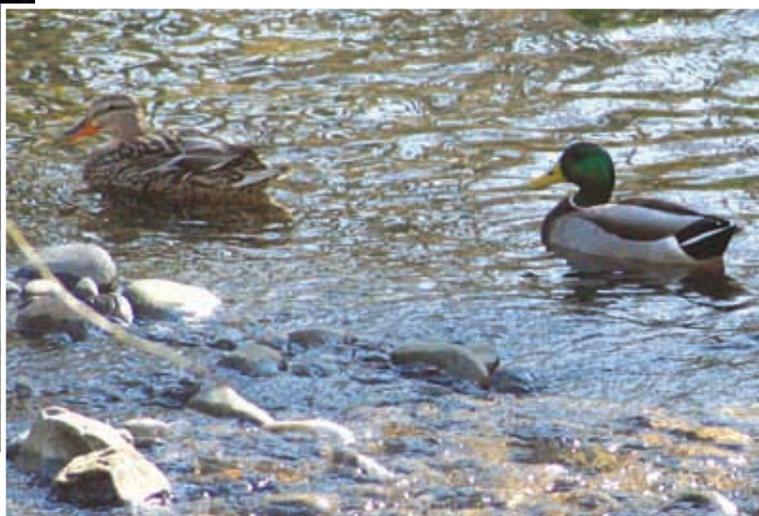
The Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC) examined the Ministry of Transportation's reports and has found that the Gateway Project will lead to a 31% increase in the greenhouse gas emissions which cause climate change. Meanwhile, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) has published a report showing the possibility of reducing emissions by 45% by 2020. It is up to us to make the right choice.



Toxic Emissions affect our Health

IF THE SOUTH FRASER PERIMETER ROAD is built as proposed and Highway 1 is doubled to eight lanes, we, the residents of communities south of the Fraser, will be encircled by major highways and every resident will be increasingly exposed to thousands of extra emissions-spewing trucks and cars every day.

Environment Canada considers vehicle emissions to be toxic. Health Canada tells us that fine particulate matter is known to aggravate symptoms in individuals who already suffer from respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada has recently reinforced the same statement with their January 2008 report card. In addition they declare there are approximately 6000 additional deaths in Canada because of short term exposure to air pollution. Do we really want to increase the number of cars, vans and trucks going through our back yard?



Investing in Livability

We can reduce TRAFFIC CONGESTION and protect the livability of our community. Let's act now to ensure the safety and stability of our community. We have the chance to ask our government to reduce pollution, traffic accidents and destruction of our green spaces. The dirty footprint that Gateway would leave on our neighbourhoods would be massive and irreversible.

We could reduce our travel times right away, save money and reduce our contribution to climate change at the same time by redirecting money ear-marked for Gateway and investing it in better public transit right now. The 2008 B.C. budget includes \$621 million more for highway expansion than for transit. It's time to stop the madness now – it's not too late for that to change. The choice is ours: let's go with sensible solutions.

Some B.C. groups working on this issue

Livable Region Coalition
www.livableregion.ca

Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC)
www.spec.bc.ca

Smart Growth BC
www.smartgrowth.v.ca

Against Port Expansion in Delta (APE)
www.againstportexpansion.org

Sunbury Neighbourhood Association
www.sunburyneighbourhood.ca

Burns Bog Conservation Society
www.burnsbog.org

Citizens Against Urban Sprawl Society (Mission)
www.causs.ca

Gateway Sucks
www.gatewayucks.org

Save Delta
www.savedelta.ca

www.wildernesscommittee.org/gateway

Every letter makes a difference!

- Contact our Provincial leaders.**
Write a letter or send an email and let them know what you think about expanding transit instead of expanding highways.
- Help Spread the Word.**
Give the Wilderness Committee a call at 604-683-8220 and we can talk about how to get more involved and become more active.

Contact the Premier

HON. GORDON CAMPBELL
ROOM 156
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS
VICTORIA, BC, V8V 1X4

@ premier@gov.bc.ca
☎ (250) 387-1715
☎ (250) 387-0087

Contact the Leader of the Opposition

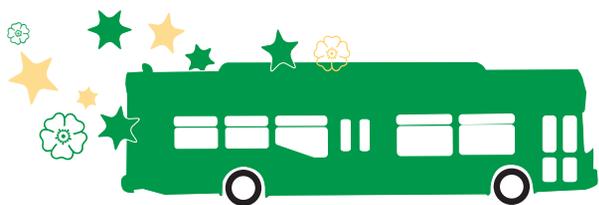
MS. CAROLE JAMES
ROOM 201, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS
VICTORIA, BC, V8V 1X4

@ carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca
☎ (250) 387-3655
☎ (250) 387-4680

YES! I want sensible solutions

Here's my tax-deductible donation.

Enclosed is: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____
Fed. reg. charity #11929-3009-RR0001



I want to become a member! Enclosed is my annual fee for a:

\$35 Individual Membership \$52 Sustaining-Family Membership

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____
City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Wilderness Committee

Please return with your gift to:
227 Abbott Street,
Vancouver, BC
V6B 2K7



credits

Writing and Editing: Ben West, Carmen Mills, Matthew Sasaki, Eric Doherty
Fact checking: Eric Doherty
Mapping: Geoff Senichenko
Design: Gil Aguilar
Photos: Joe Foy, Ben West

Western Canada Wilderness Committee
Vol. 27, No 3 Spring 2008. Canadian Mail
Product Sales Agreement No. 0900567.
Posted in Vancouver for free distribution.
Printed in Canada on recycled newsprint with
vegetable-based inks. Press Run 60,000 ©
Wilderness Committee 2008.
All rights reserved. Written material
may be used without permission
when credit is given.

Published by
Wilderness Committee — National Office
227 Abbott Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 2K7
T: 604-683-8220 F: 604-683-8229

