



## Key Request:

The City of Delta continues to seek the BC Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure's commitment to reconnect River Road as part of a core deliverable of the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project.

We ask that the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure work collaboratively with the City of Delta to explore funding options for this piece of infrastructure. Lastly, we request that the design and scope of said infrastructure be solidified to further present the case to the Federal Government for potential funding.

## Background:

Prior to the late 1950s, River Road in Delta provided an east-west connection for the community of Ladner adjacent to the Fraser River. At the time the existing George Massey Tunnel was constructed, River Road was disconnected by the highway approach to the tunnel. The vibrant community of Ladner has successfully grown over the last 70 years. The need to re-connect River Road is at a critical stage, as this crucial link is a key connection for cyclists, pedestrians, first responders, and general vehicle traffic.

## Tunnel Replacement Project:

Highway 99 is an essential connection for communities on both sides of the Fraser River and a vital trade route for Canada. Opened in 1959 as a vehicle-

only crossing, the four-lane George Massey Tunnel no longer meets the region's needs or modern seismic standards. Highway sections at both ends of the tunnel require upgrades to improve safety and traffic flow for vehicles, transit users, pedestrians, and cyclists.

In August 2021, the Province announced the replacement of the aging George Massey Tunnel with a new eight-lane immersed tube tunnel. In keeping with regional priorities, the Province has included transit improvements along the Highway 99 corridor and an active transportation connection across the Fraser River.

The new immersed tube tunnel will include three general-purpose lanes and a dedicated transit lane in each direction. The new tunnel will also provide congestion relief along the corridor, address long-term seismic safety performance issues, improve transit speed and reliability, and, establish a dedicated active transportation connection across the Fraser River, while maintaining clearance for the navigational channel.

The new tunnel is planned to be open to traffic in 2030, at which time the existing tunnel and related infrastructure will be removed.

### **River Road Overpass:**

With the construction of the new tunnel, the Province has the opportunity to re-connect River Road by providing an overpass structure over Highway 99. The Province has recently identified City of Delta as one of several communities that will be provided mandatory housing targets. While Delta Council has taken strong steps to increase housing across the community, this must be coupled with updates to its infrastructure including the transportation network. The River Road Overpass has long been established as a priority in Delta's Official Community plan and will provide benefits for emergency services as well as our overall community which is poised for growth. To accommodate the current and growing population, there is an urgent need for a secondary access to Highway 99 from Ladner. Additionally, the River Road Overpass will be a key active transportation connection for cyclists and pedestrians, providing links to regional attractions such as Deas Island Park and the Millenium Trail, as well as access to employment opportunities in the Tilbury Industrial Area.

The River Road Overpass is proposed to include a travel lane in each direction and a dedicated multi-use path for cyclists and pedestrians. The preliminary cost for the River Road Overpass Project is estimated to be around 2.5% of the overall \$4.15 billion budget for the Tunnel Replacement Project.



**Image:****Recent Updates:**

In September 2023, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) engaged a consultant to conduct a planning study for the proposed overpass. The objective of the study was to assess the feasibility of an overpass connection over Highway 99 and prepare a high-level cost-benefit analysis through a simplified Multiple Accounts Evaluation (MAE) framework as per MoTI guidelines.

City of Delta staff met with MoTI to discuss and review the draft evaluation summary. Discussions centered on the neutral rating for Economic Development which seemed contrary to the anticipated benefits of greater mobility and travel time savings offered by a new secondary access. As well, there was disagreement on the negative rating under the First Nations account as the available archaeological information would seem to indicate a lower risk level of finding First Nations artifacts in the project zone. First Nations archaeological remains were not found in the 200 test holes from the Fraser River Tunnel Project's archaeological assessment.

In May of 2024, the City of Delta made a formal submission to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance during the federal budget consultation

process, emphasizing the importance of reconnecting River Road as a crucial component of the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project. This submission highlighted the necessity of securing both provincial and federal support to ensure the inclusion of the River Road Overpass in the project's scope.

Delta's submission underscored the overpass as not only vital for local transportation and safety but also as an essential element in supporting the Province's housing targets by providing necessary infrastructure to accommodate growth, by connecting Delta's urban area (Ladner) to Delta's employment area (Tilbury). The City of Delta has requested that the provincial government take a leading role in advocating for federal funding, stressing the importance of collaboration between all levels of government to deliver this key infrastructure project.

This recent advocacy effort reinforces Delta's commitment to ensuring that the River Road Overpass is prioritized within the broader context of the Fraser River Tunnel Project, with a strong focus on securing the required funding and finalizing the project's design and scope to meet the community's needs.