



Corporate Report

NO: R092

COUNCIL DATE: May 2, 2005

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: April 14, 2005
 FROM: General Manager, FILE: 8630-20(FRC)
 Engineering 0500 01
 SUBJECT: Golden Ears Bridge Project Master Municipal
 Agreement

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council approve entering into the Master Municipal Agreement with TransLink, encompassing respective responsibilities for the completion of the Golden Ears Bridge Project (formerly called the New Fraser River Crossing).
2. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute this agreement.

INTENT

To inform Council of the content of, and issues associated with, the Master Municipal Agreement for the Golden Ears Bridge (GEB) project, as proposed by TransLink and to recommend that Council ratify this Agreement.

BACKGROUND

The concept of an additional Fraser River Crossing east of the Port Mann Bridge has long been recognized for its potential positive social, economic, and environmental benefits to the local municipalities, the GVRD and the Province. The GEB project supports the regional growth strategy, air quality, and economic development objectives of the region, and is supported by years of planning, strong demand from residents and businesses on both sides of the river, and its potential to reduce traffic congestion. It is a key component of Regional and Provincial Transportation Plans, and is complementary to the broader Gateway initiative to greatly improve access along and across the Fraser River with projects including the South Fraser Perimeter Road, North Fraser Perimeter Road, and Pitt River Bridge, and the expansion of Highway 1/Port Mann Bridge.

The Golden Ears Bridge project includes the construction of a six-lane bridge across the Fraser River east of Barnston Island along with new controlled access arterial connectors on either side of the river and upgrades to the existing road network. In Surrey, the connecting arterial road extends from 96 Avenue just west of 176 Street, eastward to pass under Highway 1 at approximately 182 Street, proceeds to the northeast to meet 98 Avenue at approximately 186 Street, and then eastward paralleling the CNR tracks to 196 Street/Langley (see attached Figure).

Surrey previously reviewed the scope and specifications of the project as presented by TransLink in the Project Options Definition Report, and found these to meet Surrey's objectives, and Council approved entering into a Memorandum of Understanding in support of further development of the project (Corporate Report R073, April 14, 2003).

DISCUSSION

The Master Municipal Agreement is a five-way Agreement between TransLink and the municipalities of City of

Surrey, Township of Langley, District of Maple Ridge, and District of Pitt Meadows. This Agreement establishes the respective obligations and responsibilities of the parties to complete the Project. Most importantly, it ensures that Surrey will not incur any unexpected costs or responsibilities as a result of the project.

The Agreement defines the project as consisting of TransLink assets, Municipal Handover Facilities, and Existing Municipal Facilities. The TransLink Assets include new roads, structures, and facilities such as a tolling infrastructure that will be constructed, operated, and maintained by the project concession or authority and funded by the bridge toll. Municipal Handover Facilities include the realignments and modifications of existing roads, highways, structures, utilities, and facilities that the concessionaire or authority will be responsible to construct to specified standards and within specified time frames, but which will then be handed over to the municipalities for ongoing operation and maintenance and asset ownership. Municipal Facilities are those components of the Municipal Network necessary to provide and maintain efficient connections, access, and acceptable levels of service; responsibility for which will rest with the Municipality with funding for improvements based on other cost-sharing agreements such as GVTA MRN Minor Capital Funding. The specific roadway components within each of these three categories within Surrey are illustrated on the attached Figure and the Municipal Handover facilities, comprising several millions of dollars of roadway infrastructure, are listed in detail in the Appendix.

There are two issues of potential concern for Surrey associated with the Project and with how these are dealt with in the Agreement.

1. The "Municipal Facilities" in Surrey included within the Agreement consist of 96 Avenue west of 176 Street. In order to avoid 96 Avenue from becoming overly congested due to GEB traffic, it will be necessary to widen 96 Avenue between 152 Street and 176 Street from 2 to 4 lanes. This need to widen would have still arisen even without the GEB; however, the new bridge will bring forward the needed date for the widening. In order to recognize the impacts on the Municipal road system, primarily 96 Avenue, the Agreement calls for the impacted roads to be considered for inclusion in the regionally funded Major Road Network (MRN). MRN status would provide capital cost-sharing towards widening plus ongoing operation and maintenance funding. In addition to the capital cost-sharing available under the MRN program, the GEB project will be providing an additional contribution toward the widening of 96 Avenue so that there is no net financial impact on the City.

TransLink is now going through the process to add 96 Avenue and one other short section of road to the MRN network. The net addition for Surrey would be 16.1 lane kilometres, with the timing of the addition to occur in 2008 or 2009 to coincide with the opening of the bridge. The additions to the MRN have been approved through the Major Roads & Transportation Advisory Committee and this decision now has to proceed to the TransLink Board level.

2. Surrey has held the position that the South Fraser Perimeter Road is one of Surrey's highest priorities for Regional Transportation Infrastructure Improvement and that the SFPR should be constructed in conjunction with the GEB. The Agreement specifies TransLink's responsibility in this regard as TransLink will "with Surrey's assistance, consult and confer with the Province to obtain with a reasonable degree of certainty a commitment from the Province that prior to such date as TransLink and Surrey agree, funding for the South Fraser Perimeter Road project will be committed by the Province." In turn, within the Agreement, Surrey is to acknowledge that construction of the FRC project may commence prior to construction of the SFPR project.

(To date no funding has been identified/allocated and no final commitment made by the Province for the construction of the SFPR. However, implementation planning for the SFPR is well advanced within the Gateway Program and a level of commitment of the Province has been demonstrated by funding for, and of acquisition of, some strategic properties along the Corridor.)

The Master Municipal Agreement has been reviewed by the Engineering Department, the City Solicitor, and by independent Counsel retained jointly by the four municipalities. This review has found the Agreement to be acceptable in preserving the interests of Surrey and in its terms and the nature and scope of commitments it includes.

CONCLUSION

The Golden Ears Bridge Master Municipal Agreement follows on the Memorandum of Understanding approved by Council on April 14, 2003. It details the respective obligations and responsibilities of TransLink and Surrey in the construction, maintenance, operations, and rehabilitation of the roadway components and associated facilities that

comprise the overall project. This Agreement has been reviewed and found to fairly assign responsibility to Surrey and to adequately protect Surrey through the assignation of responsibilities to TransLink. This Agreement ensures that Surrey will not incur any unexpected costs or responsibilities as a result of the Golden Ears Bridge project. Council's approval to enter into this Agreement is recommended.

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PH/KDZ/rdd/brb
Attachments

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