

NO: R200

COUNCIL DATE: September 13, 2010

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **August 30, 2010**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering**

PROJECT FILE: **1708-057/B**

SUBJECT: **Changes to the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Endorse in principle a revised Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program that does not include a 168 Street Grade Separation Project, which was part of the original Program, but includes a Panorama Ridge Whistling Cessation Project in its place as generally described in this report, with this endorsement in principle being subject to the results of a community consultation process that is to be carried out this Fall as a component of impact assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's endorsement of proposed changes to the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program related to projects within the City of Surrey.

BACKGROUND

To support the planned expansion of the Roberts Bank container port an environmental impact assessment under the requirements of the Canadian Environment Assessment Act (CEAA) was carried out. The socio-economic impact component of the assessment determined that there were community concerns related to the planned expansion of the port, in particular in regard to the projected increases in the number of trains to and from the port related to its increased capacity. Concerns were related to increased delay to motorists at crossings, increased community disruption due to increased train whistling noise at crossings and increased occurrence of train mechanical noise, dust and vibration.

In response to these concerns, in March 2006, Transport Canada commissioned the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Road/Rail Interface Study. This study recommended the construction of nine road/rail grade separations and identified a budget for each. Subsequently an Agreement in Principle was reached between 12 funding agencies to fund the estimated costs of the grade separations. TransLink committed to fulfill the role of Program Director and assume the administrative lead of the Program on behalf of the funding partners. The Municipalities, in which the respective grade separations are located, are designated as the Delivery Agents.

In Surrey a total of five grade separations were identified as part of the Program as follows:

- 152 Street;
- 168 Street;
- 192 Street;
- 196 Street; and
- 54 Avenue.

Under the City's obligation as the delivery agent, as a first task the Engineering Department commissioned pre-designs for each grade separation and the preparation of more detailed cost estimates based on those designs. These refined cost estimates were found to be consistent with the Agreement budgets for the 152 Street, 192 Street, 196 Street, and 54 Avenue grade separations. Consequently, reference concept designs have been prepared for these grade separations, further refinement of cost estimates has been carried out, and these projects are moving forward to the Design-Build implementation stage.

In the case of the 168 Street grade separation the predesign work established that geotechnical conditions were less favourable than were assumed in the initial study and that additional road works would be required to adequately address property access and local traffic circulation needs. The initial study estimate for the grade separation was \$24 million for purposes of the Agreement budget. The pre-design study established that a reasonable budget for this grade separation is \$46.3 million.

DISCUSSION

The prime objective of the 168 Street grade separation was to allow the Pratt (Cloverdale) railway siding to be extended to the west so as to provide an uninterrupted siding length of 3963 meters (13,000 feet). Such a length would allow trains to pass. Due to the unanticipated high cost of the grade separation, alternatives were investigated in relation to achieving the desired siding length at less cost at another location. The preferred option (see the attached Appendix 1), is an extension of the Mud Bay siding eastward to King George Boulevard. To achieve the required uninterrupted length of siding, this option would involve the closure of the 131A Street (Colebrook Road) at-grade crossing, the closure of a private at-grade crossing at 138 Street and the relocation of the at-grade crossing from the west side of King George Boulevard to the east side of King George Boulevard. A new Colebrook Road North would be constructed along the north side of the railway from 131A Street to the King George Boulevard crossing. The project would also include crossing improvements as necessary to support whistling cessation at 127A Street, 160 Street, 164 Street, 168 Street, and 184 Street. The cost of this alternative is estimated to be \$19 million.

Construction of Colebrook Road North will require relocation of a fish inhabited ditch along the length of the route, with associated environmental compensation works, and acquisition of land from Colebrook Park for the new road allowance. The existing Colebrook Road, west from King George Boulevard, will become a local property access road with no through traffic. This project will require environmental assessment under CEAA including socio-economic impact assessment and public consultation.

All other project funding partners and the operating railway companies are in agreement with the proposed substitution. The major funding partners have also agreed that any cost savings realized by the substitution versus the 168 Street grade separation budget may be applied against

possible budget pressure on any of the other Surrey projects. They have also advised that to proceed with the 168 Street grade separation would require the City of Surrey to make up the budget shortfall, estimated at about \$22 million. Preliminary discussion of the concept with a representative from Panorama Ridge indicates that residents of that area would be supportive of the project if it is successful in achieving whistling cessation at all locations affecting Panorama Ridge. The Parks, Recreation, & Culture Department support the project with its requirement for road allowance acquisition from Colebrook Park as the proposed Colebrook Road North will provide improved access in support of future park development. Colebrook Park is located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Preliminary discussions with a representative for the Agricultural Land Commission suggest that the Commission would approve removal of the required road allowance from the ALR.

The project will include at-grade crossing protection improvements for whistle cessation at several locations, including 168 Street, since this is one of the community benefits that a grade separation at 168 Street would have achieved. Although traffic volumes on 168 Street are comparatively low and are not currently close to meeting warrants for grade separation, grade separation for purposes of siding construction would have the benefit of reduced road user delays and would have put infrastructure in place, at an economical cost to the City to meet long-term future traffic capacity requirements. The broader community benefit of the whistle cessation alternative project to some extent offsets this consideration and it is considered reasonable to assume that other cost sharing opportunities will be available in the long-term future as the need for the 168 Street grade separation becomes warranted based on traffic volumes.

CONCLUSION

Proceeding with at-grade crossing closures, construction of Colebrook Road North and at-grade crossing improvements in lieu of the 168 Street grade separation in parallel with the construction of the other grade separation projects contained in the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program, offers the potential for train whistling cessation through the majority of Surrey. This will accomplish one of the major objectives of the Program related to reducing community impacts associated with increased train traffic and is expected to be generally well received by Surrey residents. Subject to Council approval of the recommendations of this report, public consultation regarding these proposed works will be undertaken this Fall.

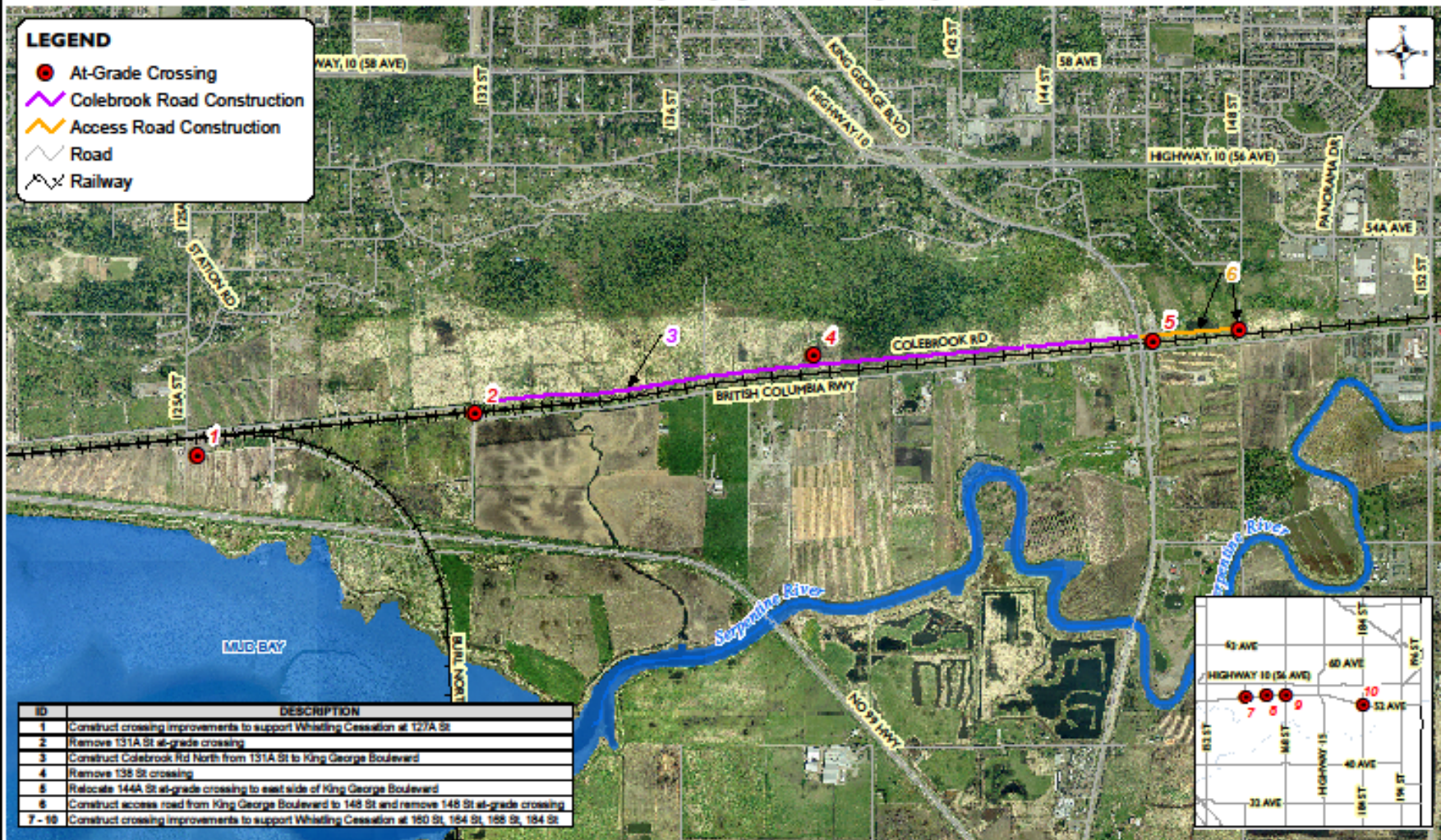
On this basis, it is recommended that Council endorse in principle a revised Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program that does not include a 168 Street Grade Separation Project, which was part of the original Program, but includes a Panorama Ridge Whistling Cessation Project in its place as generally described in this report, with this endorsement in principle being subject to the results of a community consultation process that is to be carried out this Fall as a component of impact assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

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General Manager, Engineering

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Appendix I - Aerial Photo of General Scope of Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program,
Whistle Cessation Project

APPENDIX I AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE



LEGEND

- At-Grade Crossing
- ▬ Colebrook Road Construction
- ▬ Access Road Construction
- ▬ Road
- ▬ Railway

ID	DESCRIPTION
1	Construct crossing improvements to support Whistling Cessation at 127A St
2	Remove 131A St at-grade crossing
3	Construct Colebrook Rd North from 131A St to King George Boulevard
4	Remove 138 St crossing
5	Relocate 144A St at-grade crossing to east side of King George Boulevard
6	Construct access road from King George Boulevard to 148 St and remove 148 St at-grade crossing
7 - 10	Construct crossing improvements to support Whistling Cessation at 160 St, 164 St, 168 St, 184 St

Produced by GIS Section: Aug 3, 2010, AW

Date of Aerial Photography: April 2009



ROBERTS BANK RAIL CORRIDOR PROGRAM WHISTLE CESSATION PROJECT - GENERAL SCOPE

ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT

The data provided is compiled from various sources and IS NOT warranted as to its accuracy or sufficiency by the City of Surrey. This information is provided for information and convenience purposes only. Lot sizes, legal descriptions and encumbrances must be confirmed at the Land Title Office.

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