

August 8, 2023

Via email

Communities & Stakeholders

**Re: Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT**

During the July 18, 2023, Quesnel City Council Meeting, Council reviewed and discussed the status and next steps of the Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project ("Interconnector"). This project has been on hold by the Province due to other local and provincial road priorities which took precedence over the Interconnector.

The Interconnector is a bypass type project which will provide significant benefits to the Region and anyone travelling or shipping goods either North or South on Highway 97 through Quesnel. The Regional and Provincial benefits are outlined in the background section below. The goal of Quesnel City Council is to get this project back into the Provincial capital project queue, as it has already undergone the feasibility phases and the business case analysis.

Quesnel City Council requests that you pass a resolution in support of the **Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project** or, prepare a letter of support for same. Please forward the resolution or letter to the City of Quesnel for collation and delivery to the Province, care of: llong@quesnel.ca and bjohnson@quesnel.ca (SAMPLE RESOLUTION attached for reference).

ASK

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The key regional and provincial benefits of the interconnector are as follows:

- Travel time improvements through Quesnel. The traffic bottlenecks in downtown Quesnel would be bypassed.
- Improved uptime for the bridge and rail overhead.

Mayor Ron Paull

Councillors Scott Elliott, Martin Runge, Debra McKelvie, Mitch Vik, Laurey-Anne Roodenburg, Tony Goulet



- There are no traffic detours for large trucks around these bridges, so the traffic backs up very quickly in the event of a temporary bridge shutdown.
- The lack of alternative routes, combined with the age and deterioration of the infrastructure make this a high-risk section of Highway 97.
- The two main pieces of infrastructure are the Quesnel River Bridge and the Rail Overhead, both are very old and are close to the end of their life cycles.
 - The current plan by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is to rehabilitate these structures to extend their life.
 - The re-build of the Quesnel River Bridge and Rail Overhead is estimated to take 2 years to complete, with single-lane alternating traffic required for an estimated 10 month minimum of that time.
- The plan for the Interconnector completely rethinks the traffic flows in downtown Quesnel.
 - The new Quesnel River Crossing and Rail Overpass would be realigned.
 - The old infrastructure would be left in place until the new infrastructure is ready for use, significantly reducing downtime due to construction.
- Most heavy truck traffic will be gone from downtown Quesnel, reducing downtown traffic congestion, and improving safety outcomes, seven traffic lights would be bypassed.
 - Pedestrian/Vehicular interactions would be minimized.
- Improvement in safety due to dangerous goods and other heavy traffic being moved away from downtown and the hospital.

Project Scope

- The project encompasses a 3.7 km section of Highway 97 through the downtown of Quesnel, including:
 - Replacement of the existing two-lane bridge over the Quesnel River to a four-lane structure
 - Replacement of the existing two-lane B.C. Rail overhead to a four-lane structure
 - Addition of a dedicated pathway for use by pedestrians and cyclists over the structures.



- Addition of a four-lane Interconnector to bypass the Quesnel downtown core.

Council appreciates your support for this important project, benefiting the Regional and Provincial traffic that uses Highway 97 through Quesnel.

Best Regards,



Mayor Ron Paull
City of Quesnel

Enclosure(s):

- SAMPLE Resolution

cc: Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure, Rob Fleming
Union of B.C. Municipalities
North Central Local Government Association
Northern Health Authority
Industry & Stakeholders
City of Quesnel, City Manager, Byron Johnson



Sample Resolution:

Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project

WHEREAS Highway 97 is a very significant provincial highway that is critical to the continued economic prosperity of Northern and Central BC and all British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS Highway 97 is at a considerable and growing risk level for extended delays due to aged-out highway infrastructure in Quesnel, and unacceptable construction delays in the future based on the current plans by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT <The City of ?> or <The Community of ?> or <The business/stakeholder name> supports the Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project and requests the Province proceed without delay to the Functional Design phase of the project.