

MEDIA RELEASE

TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

December 2, 2004

The City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes, District of North Cowichan, Cowichan Valley Regional District along with the Ministry of Transportation are leading the development of a ***Trans Canada Highway Corridor Management Plan*** (*Drinkwater Road to Cowichan Bay Road*). The planning and engineering consulting firm of Urban Systems is working with the Steering Committee on developing the Plan.

Study Goals

The primary purpose of the Plan is to recommend medium-term improvements for the highway corridor (as well as supporting roadways as appropriate) and to identify candidate long-term strategies to address the overall growth in traffic anticipated along and crossing the Trans Canada Highway through the study area.

Preliminary Findings

The first study phase – *Highway Conditions Assessment* – has now been complete. The input received from the study Steering Committee as well as the background technical information indicates that there are a range of key issues along the highway today and over the next 20 years. These primary issues and contributing factors are briefly summarized below.

1. ***Delays*** – significant intersection and mid-block delays that are experienced today are expected to grow in future. Total travel times through Duncan are expected to grow by as much as 150%. Although there are several contributing factors, the limited network of parallel north-south routes forces most local traffic in the Duncan area onto or across the Highway.
2. ***Safety*** – the number of collision rates between Cowichan Bay Road and Beverly from 1998 to 2002 exceeded the provincial averages for similar highway facilities. The significant number of vehicles turning at most major intersections in addition to the number and spacing of accesses along the Highway contribute toward higher than average collisions patterns.
3. ***Accommodating Pedestrians & Cyclists*** – the corridor functions as a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to travel along and across the corridor. The limited separation between the sidewalks and the highway for much of the corridor reduces overall comfort level and the attractiveness for walking and cycling.

Next Steps

The improvement strategies to be examined include both physical changes to the Trans Canada Highway and the support roadway system, as well as policies that are integrated with land uses along the corridor. The next steps will include the review of conceptual improvements that may include: *access and intersection operations, intersection improvements, corridor widening, by-pass routes, support roadways as well as corridor 'gateways' and pedestrian improvements.*

Any questions or comments can be directed to Councillor Phil Kent, Chair – Trans Canada Highway Corridor Steering Committee at 732-4009.