

HIGHWAY 63, Fort McMurray FUNCTIONAL PLANNING STUDY King Street to Confederation Way

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET #2

December 8, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation contracted McElhanney Consulting Services to undertake a Functional Planning Study for Highway 63 in Fort McMurray, from King Street to Confederation Way. Highway 63 will be upgraded to freeway standards; access to the highway will ultimately only be possible via interchanges.

The plan produced by this study will guide future decisions by the Province and the Municipality affecting development approvals, road network planning and right-of-way protection and assist the Province in setting highway improvement priorities.

STUDY PROCESS

1. Project Appraisal
2. Open House #1, June 22, 2005
3. Review of public input.
4. Presentation to municipal council, July 5, 2005
5. Assessed Municipal Growth Areas and performed Traffic Forecasts
6. Developed/Evaluated Alternative Freeway Concepts
7. Identified Preferred Freeway Concept
8. Presentation to municipal council, November 15, 2005
9. Open House #2, December 8, 2005
10. Review of public input
11. Prepare Detailed Functional Plan
12. Plan Approval by the Province by March 2006

HIGHWAY CORRIDOR ISSUES

- Increasing commuter traffic between Thickwood/Timberlea area and downtown.
- Highway serves both local commuter and long-distance traveller.
- Narrow highway corridor from King Street to Thickwood Boulevard.
- Passing Hardin, Main and Morrison Streets, Highway 63 is bounded by a fully developed business strip on the east and a steep, geotechnically sensitive, hillside on the west.
- Traffic signals at Morrison Street and accidents on the Athabasca River crossing disrupt north-south traffic movement.

PUBLIC INPUT AT OPEN HOUSE #1

	Interest or Concern	Out of 65 Responses	Current Status
1	Advance the construction schedule.	13	Province is committed to accelerated program in northeast Alberta and Fort McMurray region.

2	Expand Athabasca River crossing.	13	Bridge design is underway.
3	Widen Highway 63.	10	Design and tender is underway.
4	Construct more interchanges.	9	Planning and design is underway.
5	Install additional signals.	5	Bus transfer intersection to be signalized.
6	Improve road maintenance.	5	Rehabilitation work planned for 2006.
7	Construct ring road or bypass.	5	Bypass road would not address downtown traffic issues. Very low volume of traffic would divert around the city.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

1. Intersection Improvements
 - Beacon Hill intersection
 - Hospital Street interchange, southbound ramp
 - Southbound Bypass Lane, passing Morrison and Hardin Streets
 - Thickwood Boulevard intersection
2. Freeway North of River
 - Thickwood Boulevard interchange
 - Repair, expand and construct new Athabasca River crossing structures
 - Franklin Avenue tunnel and connection
 - Collector / Distributor lanes
 - Confederation Way interchange
3. Freeway South of River
 - Improve King Street and Hospital Street interchanges
 - Main Street interchange and Collector / Distributor lanes

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Following Open House #2 a detailed functional plan will be developed taking into account the comments received here and from other stakeholders. The functional plan will be presented to the Province for final approval before the end of March 2006. The Province has already initiated the highway and bridge detail design process.

INFORMATION?

If you were unable to attend the Open House and wish to make your comments known or would like additional information, please contact:

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A website has been established for this project. The material presented today will be added following the Open House. The website for the “*Northeast Provincial Highway Projects*” is at the following address: www.trans.gov.ab.ca/Highways/NortheastAlberta