



British Columbia Transportation Summit 2006

**Premier Gordon Campbell
January 31, 2006**

Let me start this morning by saying how much I appreciate you all coming; to see this many people in the room at this time of the day points out not just how important transportation is to this part of the province but to the whole province of British Columbia.

You know, as our economy grows, as our economy fires on all cylinders, it's important for us to recognize exactly where we stand in the world today and what we have to plan out for the future if we are going to take full advantage of where we are in British Columbia and what we can be in British Columbia.

Over the last five years we've had more job growth than any other province in the country. We know there are significant transportation investments that we have to make if we're going to maximize the opportunities for people in every single part of this province, whether they're involved in tourism or mining, forestry or energy, retailing or transportation. The transportation infrastructure is critical to all of us.

We live in a province that is ripe with opportunity, but I think that as we ride on a wave of economic success and private sector investment, we can't take that for granted. We live in an open world. We are a small open-trading economy. You can see our province as we sit here at the crossroads of North America.

I am gathered here with our Minister of Transportation, Kevin Falcon, and our MLA for Surrey-Tynehead, Dave Hayer. I know the opposition Transportation critic is also here today, the chair of TransLink, the former chair of TransLink, the chair of the Port Authority, Lorne Mayencourt from Vancouver-Burrard, the CEO of the airport. All of these components of our province have got to come together if we are going to maximum our natural advantages in British Columbia.

When you think about us as a small open-trading economy, what does that really mean? It means that we are driven, or should be driven, by our customers. If we don't think in terms of what our customers want, what our customers need, we will lose opportunities. This is not the world of 50 years ago. This is the world of the twenty-first century. This is the world of reliable delivery of products to people where they need them, when they need them, on time, any place in the world.

And what a great place in the world we all live — British Columbia. We've watched as our ports have grown and as the impact on the ports continues to rule our economy in British Columbia: \$35 billion in goods were shipped through our ports in 2003.

Now, have a look at the province and see where it sits. We are Canada's only Pacific province. Where is the world moving? Where is the world shifting? It is shifting to the Pacific. And as we think of those massive economies that are growing at record paces in China, in India, the substantial economic growth in Korea, the renewed economic vigour of Japan and the whole ASEAN, we recognize that British Columbia is at a crossroads. We are a gateway.

If you think of our customers for a minute, we know that we can do substantially better by 2020 if we invest. Our ports in British Columbia are two shipping days closer to the Asian markets. But it doesn't help to be two shipping days closer to the Asian markets if it's four shipping days sitting at port wondering when the goods are going to move through the system to the marketplaces they're aimed for in North America. We have to think of ourselves first and foremost as delivering services to our customers. Our goal and objective by 2020 is not just to double our goods and services that are moved through our ports but to more than quadruple them. In the last little while alone we've watched a 56-percent increase in trade from China through the Port of Vancouver — 56 percent. Over the next 15 years we expect that the Asia Pacific container traffic in North America will more than double.

So just think of this for a second as we listen to all these statistics today: If container traffic is going to more than double we have to more than double our throughput just to stand still. If we want to do better, if we want to take advantage of our unique geographic location, of our unique ability to service goods and people and the economy, we're going to have to invest more. And we believe that we can do that in British Columbia. We believe that we can reach for a whole new set of opportunities in this province which will create thousands and thousands of new jobs. If we put \$35 billion in trade through our ports in 2005, we can put \$75 billion through our ports by 2020. We can move from 26,000 direct jobs to 71,000 direct jobs.

We are a small, open economy. Just think of this: One mill in British Columbia produces all the wood that we need for our province to consume — just one mill. We hardly even touch the coal reserves that we have in this province that we're shipping overseas. We don't even begin to be able to consume all of the tourism products and opportunities that are there for us.

As a small, open economy, we depend on trade, and make no mistake: Trade depends on transportation, and it's time for us to invest in our transportation infrastructure in British Columbia. And transportation is ports; it's airports; it's roads; it's rail. Across this province we have to invest in a comprehensive, integrated transportation program that opens up opportunities, opens up investment opportunities for British Columbia.

Right now as you think of the goods that flow from our province south of the border through just one border crossing in British Columbia -- the Douglas border crossing which is the fourth-busiest border crossing in Canada. We're investing almost a quarter-billion dollars in improving our border crossing infrastructure in this province, because we want goods to flow from the far north right down through our province and into the marketplaces in the United States.

We're investing in airports — not just in YVR, one of the best airports in the world; we're investing in airports in Cranbrook, in Prince George, in Campbell River, in Nanaimo. All of those airports are part of a transportation infrastructure that's critical to our economic and social well-being as a province.

As we look to the future, it's important for us to recognize that a transportation investment plan requires a multi-modal response that meets all of the needs of all of the regions of this province. We are providing and laying out for the people of British Columbia a comprehensive, multi-modal, provincewide transportation investment plan for the long term that will provide long-term benefits for all the people who live here. We're coordinating efforts with the federal government, with TransLink and with regional governments across the province.

One hundred million dollars is being invested in the port of Prince Rupert as we speak. Eleven million additional dollars is going to Cranbrook airport. All of those investments are critical to the long-term infrastructure development in our province.

But obviously we can't do everything all at once in British Columbia and succeed; we can't afford to do everything all at once, so we are focusing on some critical transportation corridors right now. You've watched as the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project has moved forward. It's a public-private partnership which is providing substantial additional public benefits with substantially lower risks to the public purse than we've seen in the past.

The new William R. Bennett Bridge, which will be opened in the Okanagan, is a way of moving people and goods through the fastest-growing region in the province. The new Kicking Horse Canyon project is a \$730 million project on Highway 1 which will be years before it's complete.

As we look at the province we typically think east-west, but it's also important for us to think north-south. The four-laning of the Cariboo Connector from Prince George all the way to Cache Creek is a critical component of making sure that our resources get to markets in a ready way, in a way that's dependable, in a way that's reliable.

As we've looked at the entire province, one of our goals has been to open up the opportunities that are available through the port of Prince Rupert. As I mentioned, we are already investing in partnerships with the federal government, with the private sector: \$100 million to expand the port and improve its competitiveness so we can help expand container and cruise ship capacity there. It will be a huge bonus for the northwestern part of the province, for much of the mineral deposits and the mining opportunities and forestry opportunities that take place in the north.

It is the closest port in North America to the Asian marketplace. If you offload in Prince Rupert, you'll be on the CN Rail which will take you to Prince George, and you'll be in Chicago two days faster than was previously the case. All of this investment is meant to ensure that we have a smooth flow of goods through the province of British Columbia, yes, to Canada but also to other parts of the North American marketplace for our Asian customers.

It also provides at least a bit of a relief to the congestion that we are currently feeling at the crossroads of Pacific Canada here in the Port of Vancouver and in the Lower Mainland. The Lower Mainland is the most significant congestion point we have as we think of moving goods and people through this marketplace to Asia and from Asia back through to North America.

We've seen substantial growth in the Lower Mainland over the last number of years, but just think of this: It's expected that by 2030 we will have increased our province's population by the same population as the province of New Brunswick. We are a popular place to live, we're a popular place to work, and as we plan out for the future, it is critical for us to think of planning a long-term, sustainable transportation infrastructure which reinforces our communities and our regional plans so that we remain one of the best places on Earth that we can possibly live.

The federal government has looked at congestion in the Lower Mainland and suggested that right now the friction that is provided by congestion in this part of our province costs about \$1.5 billion a year — \$1.5 billion a year. Imagine what that would be if we just doubled as opposed to quadrupling the throughput that we're expecting to in British Columbia's ports without addressing congestion issues.

Truck traffic across the U.S. border is expected to double by 2031. The BC Trucking Association, just one component of our transportation infrastructure, estimates that current congestion costs them about \$500 million a year in terms of shipments. Remember, those costs are transferred to customers. If we're going to be competitive, if we're going to be reliable, we have to deal with the issue of congestion.

We expect that by 2031 there will be a third more vehicle trips around the region. And here's something that's important for us to remember as we think about our plans for the long term here in the Lower Mainland: This isn't the same Lower Mainland as it was 25 years ago. Vancouver is not the only place that people work anymore. The city of Surrey is growing. The city of Surrey is going to be a critical urban centre if we're going to maintain the long-term health of this region.

The northeastern part of our region, Coquitlam, is growing. As you look further out in the valley to Abbotsford, to Chilliwack, we know they are going to be important centres of learning, of economic activity and of cultural activities.

So as we create a transportation infrastructure, we should recognize we are not just going to be moving forward with one set of plans. We also have to have a design, an urban design, which reinforces that infrastructure and creates the kind of healthy environment that's so critical to us in the long term.

What happens if we don't act? Well, currently the Port Mann Bridge is congested from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. In 2003, commuters waited in a five-kilometre traffic jam to get across the bridge. It's estimated that by 2016 that traffic jam will have expanded to 216th Street at the Surrey-Langley border — 17 kilometres; 17 kilometres of people sitting and waiting to move across that particular bridge.

Commute times have increased by 30 percent in the last decade alone, and think of this: the Port Mann Bridge that we know today, the Port Mann Bridge that we know and love today, carries more traffic than the Golden Gate Bridge does with fewer lanes. How many of you can picture of the Golden Gate Bridge with the two levels, all those cars going back and forth? If you're looking at a Hollywood movie of San Francisco, and they want to show the congestion, what do they show you? The Golden Gate Bridge and all those cars going back and forth.

Our Port Mann Bridge takes more cars. There is more traffic that moves across and there are more demands that will be heaped on it. It's the largest traffic choke point in the Lower Mainland. I have to say it's the largest traffic choke point in our province.

And the traffic choke point creates other challenges for us that we must respond to in terms of environmental degradation and in terms of pollution. If we don't take action now, we are going to see a substantial decrease and deterioration not just in the movement of goods but in the quality of our environment.

Our plan includes many components and let's not forget as we look to the future what the steps of our plan are. We are investing literally billions of dollars today in rapid transit to move people around this region. The Canada Line, about \$1.9 billion; the new Evergreen Line to the northeast sector is hundreds of millions more dollars. As we've invested in border infrastructure, we want to assure that goods and people are moving through the border in a timely fashion.

And here's another important component of our plan: Allowing people to move around on bicycles in their communities, move around on bicycles throughout the region.

For all those of you who are sitting here today thinking you're at a transportation summit, let me remind you that the more active we are, the healthier we are, the more we will have to invest in transportation in the future. So many of you didn't think this when you started your day, but I hope you had at least a little bit of your fruit and vegetable mix, because the more apples you eat, the more vegetables you eat, the more times you ride your bike, the more resources there will be available to invest in transportation infrastructure in the future because we won't be having to spend it on health care.

So today I am pleased to announce that we are launching the Gateway Program for the province of British Columbia. Make no mistake, this is a significant initiative on behalf of all of the people of British Columbia and — I'd like to underline this — on behalf of all of the people of Canada, because British Columbia is Canada's gateway to the Pacific; British Columbia is Canada's door to opportunities in the Asia Pacific.

The Gateway Project Definition Report that we are making public today is available to people across the province. It's available to all of you here. It launches a discussion, a consultation that will take place throughout the region, and that consultation is going to be a critical part of what we do as we build towards an even brighter future in British Columbia.

This is a \$3 billion plan over the next number of years. There are three priority corridors that we will be providing investments in that will reflect the needs and, indeed, the improvements that British Columbians have asked for.

The Port Mann Bridge will be doubled. It includes opportunities for transit, opportunities for cycling — in fact, the largest single expansion of cycling infrastructure in the history of the province — because as we look to the future, we have to look at all of our transportation infrastructure if we're going to maximize the benefits for the people of British Columbia and if we're going to provide for a number of traffic management initiatives that are going to be undertaken.

The Port Mann Bridge was opened in 1964. Just think of this, because we take these things for granted, but 1964 was a long, long time ago. In 1964 — listen to this — W.A.C. Bennett had only been elected for 12 years. He had eight years to go. In 1964 the region was dramatically different.

We will not just be doubling the bridge; we'll be widening the number of lanes and the highway all the way to Langley so we provide HOV opportunities. We'll be providing public transit opportunities to be reintegrated for the first time since 1986.

We shouldn't be under any illusions. Highway 1 is a critical piece of transportation and social infrastructure for the Lower Mainland. It suffers the worst congestion, as I've mentioned, out of all the major routes that we have.

The second component of this is the South Fraser Perimeter Road. The South Fraser Perimeter Road is about an \$800 million project. It will connect critical infrastructure to Highway 1. It will connect Tilbury and Sunbury and Port Kells. It'll connect the new Delta port and the massive investments that are being made there. It will stop the kind of what is often called in a very technical term "rat running" that we're seeing through communities like Delta and Surrey. It will focus the way that we can move goods and flow people through.

It is part of the important Delta Way construction project that will connect people with Highway No. 1 and it will help flow the goods and services that we need to. It is a critical part of providing our customers with the service that they need and the people who live here with the services they need.

Another critical component is the new North Fraser Perimeter Road. The North Fraser Perimeter Road will include a new Pitt River Bridge — seven lanes to help ease the flow and provide for the kind of flow that's necessary to merge the Mary Hill Bypass and cross the Pitt River. That project will be launched this year and we're looking to an opening in 2009.

It is an example of the partnership that has been built between the province and the federal government. The federal government is contributing \$90 million to that project, and it's an example of why this is a national initiative that has national scope and national import as we move ahead. The North Fraser Perimeter Road will connect with Golden Ears, a critical part of TransLink transportation investments and improvements as they look to the future.

It is important for us to think of the Port Mann, the South Fraser and North Fraser Perimeter Roads as part of an integrated transportation plan, as a plan that builds on the investments we've made and the investments we will make in the future. You can see that by integrating these transportation facilities we are providing transportation infrastructure for the Delta port and the Fraser port expansion.

We will complement the new rapid transit improvements that are being made both in the Canada Line and in the Northeast Sector Line. It is important to note that we also are complementing the border infrastructure investments which have already been announced at 176th and No. 10. All of this is to eliminate the congestion that currently takes place, the economic friction that holds us back and the economic friction that is holding our customers back as they wait to see whether they want to move through the ports in British Columbia, the Canadian ports to the North American marketplace.

There are some very important components of this that I think are critical to us as we move ahead. The Gateway Program will include queue jumpers so public transit, as I've mentioned, can continue.

How many of us remember what it was like to have public transit on the Port Mann Bridge? You can't put public transit across the Port Mann Bridge today because it is not reliable. This project allows us to reintroduce public transit. It allows us to provide for HOV lanes all the way to Langley, as I've suggested. It allows us to

provide for queue jumpers that will assure that public transit stays on time. In fact, as you'll see in the Project Definition Report, the design includes the opportunity to establish light rail across the Port Mann in the long-term future.

This will also be the largest single investment in cycling infrastructure in the history of the province: \$50 million. I was asked earlier by someone: Does that mean people will actually ride their bikes across the Port Mann Bridge? The answer is: Yes, that means people will ride their bikes across the Port Mann Bridge.

There are measures that we can provide to allow priority to commercial vehicles so those goods can move throughout our transportation infrastructure. We often talk about people movement, but our economic lifeblood is also goods movement, and that is a critical component of what we are trying to establish here.

As we look at the opportunities that are in front of us, I think it's critical for us to note that all of this has to be paid for. One of the things that I think is very important as we think of the future is to recognize that as we look at these things and we see the advantages that can come from these opportunities, we have to look at how we can manage our traffic demand and how we can maximize the benefits of the investments that we're making.

So I want to say that one of the things that we will be considering with the public as we move to the future is the use of a toll on the Port Mann facility that will match the toll that is currently being proposed and will be in place on Golden Ears. That toll extends the life of this transportation project by more than a decade. That toll helps us manage the traffic that will flow through this system and respond to some of the concerns that have been raised by local governments across the region.

But it is critical to note that this is a public consultation. We want people to know the upsides and the downsides of both the proposals that we are putting out and what we can do to make sure that we afford them in the long term. We have to move forward in a way that includes people, and we intend to do just that.

So today I ask you to be part of the consultations that will take place over the next 18 months with regard to this Gateway Project. I ask you to think of how it will work to improve your businesses and your opportunities, how it will work in your communities, because this is, I believe, an exciting project that will move British Columbia forward, that will help British Columbians realize their dreams.

We'll move towards procurement for the Pitt River Bridge project within the coming weeks. It will have a huge and positive impact on Maple Ridge, on Pitt Meadows, on Coquitlam, on those who have suffered through the Mary Hill bypass on a regular basis over the last decade and a half.

Years of technical work have gone into bringing this plan to fruition, years of work with local governments, with regional governments; more than a hundred meetings have already taken place.

In 2006 we'll be proceeding to an environmental assessment process for the South Fraser Perimeter Road. We'll be working with the federal government in the hopes of securing federal contributions to make sure that that goes ahead.

We will also be moving forward with the Gateway Definition Project which is available to the public through our web. There will be meetings that will start, I believe, on February 18th and it will be important for the public to come to discuss, to talk, to ask questions and to reach their own conclusions about where we hope to go.

Let me just talk to you briefly about what this means to the people who live here. I mentioned earlier it means jobs. It obviously means investment. Let me outline for you how this investment works in terms of the transportation infrastructure that we face.

Right now we're all aware of the economic activity that's taking place on the Sea-to-Sky Highway, on the Canada Line, on what's taking place in the northeast sector, what's taking place in the Kicking Horse Canyon. The way these projects will flow out is we will watch as the activities that are taking place on those projects we are aware of today start to wind down so that we have an opportunity to have even more economic investment in transportation in the long term. As we build expertise here it will move forward over the next five to six years so that it can carry out the Gateway Project in a way that's economically viable and feasible.

We have been very conservative in estimating these costs. Each of the projects I've outlined for you: The Port Mann Bridge about \$1.5 billion; the South Fraser Perimeter Road about \$800 million; the North Fraser Perimeter Road about \$400 million. Each of those project costs have project contingencies built into them, and to be safe we have an extraordinary contingency of \$300 million built in for the long term.

We believe it is time for British Columbia to open itself up to opportunities, to think of what this means for families that live here. Many of you in the trucking industry will be aware of the congestion that you face as you go about your day-to-day business. But many of us just travel around this region trying to get from one place to the other, trying to make it to work or back. If this project goes ahead, the average trip from Langley to Vancouver and back will be reduced by an hour by the time it's completed. That's an hour more that you have for your family. It's an hour more that you have to be in your community.

We have an exciting future ahead of us in this province. I want to congratulate the Chamber of Commerce for establishing this transportation summit because it is the springboard that will move us to the place that we should be, to our rightful position in Canada as an economic leader, as a social leader, as the crossroads to opportunity.

British Columbia's time has come. We must invest in our future if we are to take full advantage of the future that lies before us and if we are to give opportunities to the young people that depend on us.

Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

