

Welcome to the first edition of *Community Update*, a progress report on the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project.

This bulletin will be produced as project milestones are achieved to keep you and others with an interest in the highway informed about key developments and items of interest, as well as to encourage two-way communications between corridor communities and the project team.

If you have any questions or comments about the project or this newsletter, don't hesitate to email the project team at info@seatoskyimprovements.ca, fax us at (604) 605-5936 or write us at Suite 1300, 1075 West Georgia, Vancouver V6E 3C9. You can also contact the Community Relations Manager at (604) 605-5955.

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project has undertaken extensive community consultation, participating in more than 400 public meetings about project scope, traffic management and preliminary design since 2002. This reflects the project's commitment to ensuring that community objectives are considered when designing the improvements.



Crews work on putting in backfill for the retaining walls on the Test Section, as part of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project. The project made innovative use of retaining walls to support new highway lanes. The technique proved itself during the construction of the test section and will be used in other areas of the project.

Project Overview

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project is carrying out extensive safety, reliability and capacity improvements to the 100-kilometre highway linking communities from West Vancouver to Whistler.

The work will make travel along the corridor safer for residents, commuters and tourists and will be completed by late 2009. The highway improvements will serve population growth, economic development in corridor communities and increased demand for resident and visitor travel and for goods movement.

The improvements include widening and straightening the highway, improving sightlines, providing additional passing lanes and incorporating other design innovations to reduce hazards, shorten travel times and increase capacity of the highway.

The \$600-million highway improvement project will reduce the number and severity of accidents on the highway. There are about 300 accidents each year on the current highway, and the improvements will reduce that by about 30 percent.

It will also improve the reliability by widening the highway and shoulders, and introducing measures to reduce wind exposure, lessen rain pooling on the road surface and reduce the amount of debris washed onto it.

Capacity will also be increased, reducing periods of congestion and delay for road users travelling between West Vancouver and Whistler and making the movement of goods and people more efficient and less costly. Other primary goals of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project include completing the project by late 2009, managing traffic flows during construction to minimize disruption and maximize predictability and remaining within the project budget.

The project is expected to create 6000 new jobs as a result of economic activity generated along the corridor.

Improvements underway between Ansell Place and Lions Bay

As part of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project, work is now underway to widen the seven-kilometre stretch of the highway from Ansell Place to Kelvin Grove from two to four lanes. Work began in September 2004 and is expected to be completed by the fall of 2007.

During construction, the improvement project is ensuring that traffic is managed to minimize disruption and maximize predictability so that users of the highway are inconvenienced as little as possible. Work will continue throughout the year, within the allowable traffic stoppage regime.

Current information about delays on this and other sections of the highway is available at our web site, seatoskyimprovements.ca, or by calling 1-877-4SAFE99 (1-877-472-3399.)

> The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project will result in:

- Four lanes from Horseshoe Bay to Lions Bay.
 - Two lanes from Lions Bay to Porteau Cove.
 - Three lanes from Porteau Cove to Squamish.
 - Four lanes within urban Squamish.
 - Three lanes from Squamish to Whistler.
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Squamish office opened

Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon and Squamish Mayor Ian Sutherland officially opened the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project office in Squamish with a brief ceremony and official ribbon-cutting on September 17, 2004.



Squamish Mayor Ian Sutherland and Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon cut the ribbon to officially open the Squamish office for the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project. The office serves as an operations centre for project personnel.

Noting that the \$600-million project is on schedule and will result in improved safety, reliability and capacity, Minister Falcon said the Squamish office “will be a place where people can go to learn more about the project, provide input to the project team and have their questions answered.”

Mayor Sutherland welcomed the office to Squamish, pointing out that the community is “the central hub of the Sea-to-Sky corridor.” He also acknowledged the role of Ted Nebelling, the MLA for the area, who “lobbied for many years for improvements to this highway” and was a strong supporter of locating the office in Squamish.

Mayor Sutherland added that “the District of Squamish will enjoy significant economic benefits from the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project and now, the communities in the region will have enhanced access to information about it.”

The office is located in Suite 103 at 42000 Loggers Lane and serves as an operations centre for project personnel. Staff includes Community Relations Officer Pam Tattersfield, who provides information about the project and answers questions from the public. She can be contacted at (604) 898-2117. The office is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

In addition to opening the office, the transportation minister also announced:

- Completion of the first kilometre of the improvement project between Montizambert Creek and Strip Creek.
- A \$39-million work package to widen the highway to four lanes between Ansell Place and Kelvin Grove.
- A \$4.3-million work package for pre-construction work between Cheakamus Canyon and Daisy Channel.

Test Section completed on time and on budget

The first kilometre of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project – known as the Test Section – was completed on time and on budget in late August 2004.

Work on the section of highway between Montizambert and Strip Creek south of Lions Bay began in November 2003. It focused on widening the highway to the west through innovative use of retaining wall structures to support new highway lanes, rather than disrupting traffic by carrying out large rock excavations on the east side of the highway.

The one-kilometre section was known as the Test Section because its objectives were to:

- Confirm geotechnical assumptions.
- Determine which types of retaining wall structures were the most viable solutions for highway construction in areas with difficult terrain.
- Test the impact of the proposed traffic management regime on construction.
- Ensure that the industry benefits from the lessons learned by sharing test section findings with industry for future consideration.

Those objectives were achieved and the techniques developed during construction of the Test Section will be employed in other areas of the highway.

Minimizing environmental impact is project goal

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project is committed to designing and building highway improvements in a way that minimizes environmental impacts.

The project then opted in to the provincial environmental review administered by the BC Environmental Assessment Office (EAO).

After completing an extensive review of project design issues; geotechnical issues; impacts to wildlife, vegetation, fisheries and water quality; noise, community and cultural impacts, the assessment review concluded that “all potential significant adverse effects of the project are manageable to an acceptable level.” The project received environmental certification in June 2004.

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If you've got questions or comments about the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project, we want to hear from you.

You can:

- email your comments to info@seatoskyimprovements.ca,
- fax us at (604) 605-5936 or
- write us at Suite 1300, 1075 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 3C9

Be sure to include your name and address so that we can answer your questions.

You can also contact a member of the project's community relations team:

Manager - Rick Hyde
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Community Relations Officer, Whistler – Scott Roberts
(604) 932-0712 scott.roberts@gems2.gov.bc.ca