

May 6, 2010

File No. 0540-20

Rail Freight Service Review Secretariat
Suite 808-180 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Dear Panel Members:

This is a submission by the South of the Fraser Community Rail Task Force comprised of elected Councillors from the South of the Fraser region and Chaired by Mayor Rick Green of the Township of Langley. It also includes appointed members from Trinity Western University, The University of the Fraser Valley and Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Rational for Submission

Whilst all parties are proponents for Canada benefiting from increased world commerce, these events come at a price for the citizens who live on the door step of the day to day operations which facilitate the same. On a daily basis, the Township of Langley endures considerable impact of heavy rail freight traffic as the price for supporting the Canadian global trade expansion. It is imperative that all steps which can ameliorate these negative effects are taken by the relevant parties.

The RFSR Terms of Reference sets out challenges and premises under which this uneasy relationship exists. From the perspective of South of Fraser communities this includes such realities as:

- a) shippers not having alternate options to get goods to market cost effectively.
- b) bulk commodity shippers have minimal practical alternatives to rail.
- c) constraints on railway capacity and operations including availability of land to expand facilities in urban areas.
- d) the behavior of the railroads and expectations of the various municipalities and landowners through which rail entities operate.
- e) passenger rail service being excluded from any consideration.

While we detail problems which exist with the current bulk trans-shipment of coal and containers through the South of Fraser region, we are proposing a solution which has been diligently thought through, is workable, economically sound and will actually streamline railway operations.

Background on Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Regional District in BC Lower Mainland

This area is the home to over 50% of the current population of BC and is the western termination of the two Canadian transcontinental rail suppliers, CN Rail and CP Rail. In addition, there is a northern termination of BNSF service from the USA at Coquitlam.

A short line entity, Southern Rail of BC operates on leased rail RoW owned by the BC Hydro and Power Authority (BCHPA).

CP Rail's main western marshalling yards are in Coquitlam on the north side of the Fraser River. CN Rail's main marshalling yards are the Thornton Yards south of the Fraser River, under and slightly west of the Port Mann Bridge, which carries the Trans-Canada Highway over the Fraser River.

Due to the bottle neck effects of the Fraser Canyon, an agreement was struck between CP and CN whereby they use the CP line for eastbound operations between Mission, BC and Kamloops and the CN line for westbound operations between Kamloops and Mission. This agreement essentially allows for a uni-direction "freeway" for rail traffic through the Coast Mountains. Once in the Fraser Valley, train operations can cross to either RR Company's line at the CP Bridge in Mission, or via limited use of the 105 year old bridge at New Westminster.

The New Westminster Bridge, over 100 years old is owned by the federal government, has speed restrictions (5 miles/per hour) and cannot accommodate many of the longer and heavier capacity trains that are in use today.

Trains bound for Roberts Bank from north of the Fraser/Coquitlam area and west must travel east to the Mission Rail bridge and back through Langley City and Langley Township to access DeltaPort at Roberts Bank, a distance of some 100 km. This costs money and ties up infrastructure/assets.

Background on South of the Fraser Area

This long sliver of land encompasses the area South of the Fraser River which is constricted by the Strait of Georgia replete with the Roberts Bank bulk terminal and containers to the west, the USA to the south, and the coast mountains to the east at Hope, BC.

This portion of the region is made up of the following cities: (starting at the Strait of Georgia) Richmond, Delta, Surrey, Langley City, Langley Township, Abbotsford and The District of Chilliwack. This area currently has a population of over 1 million with another 500,000 to be in place by 2031. Surrey (pop: 450,000), Langley Township (pop: 100,000), Langley City (Pop: 25,000) and Abbotsford (pop: 180,000) are three of Canada's fastest growing cities. By 2031, over 30% of the total BC population will live in this small area.

This region has much of the add-on trade of the trans-shipment business i.e. warehousing and distribution for importers of consumer/industrial goods and automobiles.

A major point of contention in this South of Fraser Region is the trans-shipment of containers and bulk commodities such as coal. This is due to the fact these shipments come westbound on the CN line and divert from same via the CP Pratt-Livingston Corridor (approximately 13 km) at approximately 232 Street in the Township of Langley. This container and coal traffic continues and bisects the Township of Langley, Langley City and continues through to Cloverdale in Surrey where it exits the CP Pratt-Livingston corridor and continues out to Roberts Bank through Surrey and Delta on the BC Rail line.

This container "coal train" corridor currently handles approximately 18-20 trains per day up to 12,000 feet in length. Published expansion plans in conjunction with current port expansion will result in up to 38 trains a day travelling this corridor. WestShore Terminals has just made a \$42 million investment to add 50% loading/mixing and storage capacity, alone.

The heavy rail freight traveling through our increasingly crowded population centre represents a distinct quality of life and safety issue for Langley residents in light of the impact of growing rail traffic and the four major derailments since the line was opened to serve DeltaPort.

This 13 km long CP Pratt-Livingston subdivision, in reality, is part of the BC Hydro and Power Authority RoW and it is leased to CP as well as Southern Rail of BC.

It is very important to understand why the traffic goes via this route versus staying on the CN mainline through the Thornton yards, down the BNSF corridor and out to Roberts Bank; as such we will look at a couple of past studies.

Historical Studies re Roberts Bank Port Facility

Lower Mainland Planning Board-August 1968

This 29 page brief is remarkable in its brevity, clarity, foresight and action plan, especially when one considers it was drafted and presented over 40 years ago.
*A copy accompanies this letter.

Greater Vancouver Gateway Council Lower Mainland Rail Infrastructure Report- December 2004

This report was generated with the participation of all major stakeholders i.e. Transport Canada, City of Vancouver, BCMOT, Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, CN, CP, Port of Vancouver, BNSF, Southern Railway of BC and the Railway Association of BC. This study which is only six years old determines the need for a new rail bridge at New Westminster.

URL Address: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/fcflats/pdf/gatewayexecsummary.pdf>

- A copy of this study accompanies the letter.
- Please review its executive summary.

Recent Developments

Passenger Running Rights Preserved on BC Rail RoW Scott Road-Chilliwack

In July 2009, the Agreement to preserve passenger running rights on the BCPHA Right of Way was extended by BC Hydro at the request of the Township of Langley and all South of the Fraser Municipal and City Councils. These passenger running rights are on a "no charge basis" on up to 33% of total freight wheelage. This will put considerable pressure on CP Rail and CN Rail to be able to accommodate frequent passenger traffic interleaved with traditional heavy freight operations. Whether CP Rail would opt to double track the Pratt-Livingston corridor to ameliorate these potential traffic issues in the event of deployment of Light Rail is yet to be established as a large section of the Pratt-Livingston Corridor is too narrow to double track.

South of Fraser Community Rail Task Force

The South of Fraser Community Rail task Force was established after passenger running rights on the BCPHA RoW were confirmed.

Chaired by Township of Langley Mayor Rick Green, it is made up of elected representatives from Delta, Surrey, White Rock, Langley City, Langley Township, Abbotsford and post-

secondary institutions comprised of Trinity Western University, The University College of the Fraser Valley and Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Realizing that South of the Fraser will represent in excess of 30% of the BC population by 2031 and with no current plans by the Government of BC or TransLink to provide rail service in the near future, they are defining the various requirements to bring Commuter/Community rail to South of Fraser. Ironically, the BCHPA RoW from Scott Road to Chilliwack is the route of the former BC Electric Inter-Urban, which commenced operations exactly a century ago in 1910.

Executive Summary and Recommendations:

When one reviews all aspects of past commercial history, vertical integration and concentration of railways and studies which have been commissioned over the past 40+ years, the wisdom and precognition of the Lower Mainland Planning Board is undisputed.

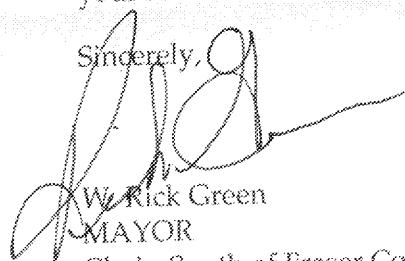
There is pressure to replace the Patullo Bridge due to its age and number of traffic fatalities. As this bridge is 100 yards downstream from the New Westminster rail bridge, there is an opportunity for a single structure to replace both old structures. Changes which will be required to streamline road/railway approaches to a new consolidated bridge will provide an opportunity to visually improve the waterfront whilst saving on capital costs.

Replacement of the New Westminster rail bridge either in a single or separate structure would allow for local shunting of rolling stock between CP and CN rail yards versus having it make unnecessary trips through City and Township of Langley via the Mission rail bridge. Just think of savings on diesel fuel, minimizing facility congestion and less particulate pollution in the upper Fraser Valley where air inversions are the worst. As there are plans afoot by TransLink to replace the Patullo Bridge, this would be an opportunity to build both on a single, seismically survivable structure. Notwithstanding these benefits, a new structure would greatly improve running times or Amtrac passenger service between Vancouver and San Francisco.

Public pressure to reintroduce Community Rail on the CP Rail Pratt-Livingston section will either force double tracking of that portion of the line to integrate freight and passenger operations or reach out for an alternative solution.

We would be pleased to provide back-up material for all technical assertions presented or meet with you to further clarify any issues. I am enclosing copies of the studies referred to for your review. If there are any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at 604.533.6000.

Sincerely,



W. Rick Green
MAYOR

Chair, South of Fraser Community Rail Task Force

Copy: South of Fraser Community Rail Task Force Members

Encl. Report: "Rail Service to the Roberts Bank Port Facility"
Summary: "Lower Mainland Rail Infrastructure Study"
Report: "Lower Mainland Rail Infrastructure Study Final Report"