

Quesnel North-South Interconnector

A vital project for the province, region, and community

CURRENT SITUATION

In Quesnel, Highway 97 passes over the Quesnel River Bridge and CN Rail Overhead Bridge, both built in 1961. The bridges are narrow, two lanes, and do not have a shoulder. The Quesnel River Bridge is a steel truss bridge with a height restriction. The highway travels through seven controlled intersections over 1.7 km along Carson Avenue and Front Street. This section of highway is the worst chokepoint on the Cariboo Connector.

The current configuration slows travel, increases transportation costs, impedes development, restricts active transportation, negatively impacts air quality, noise pollution, and emissions, and creates community safety concerns.

The Quesnel River Bridge and CN Rail Overhead Bridge are in poor condition with the Rail Overhead Bridge scheduled for refurbishment under the current configuration in 2027.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Quesnel North-South Interconnector project would replace the Quesnel River Bridge and CN Rail Overhead Bridge with four lane bridges with no height restriction and a separated active transportation lane. Construction of 3.4 km of new highway passing around North Quesnel would eliminate 7 controlled intersections, adding one new roundabout at the south end and one new controlled intersection at the north end of the new stretch of highway.

The new configuration would allow uninterrupted traffic flow, decrease travel time, lower transportation costs, encourage investment, facilitate active transportation, improve air quality, noise pollution and GHG emissions, realize reconciliation objectives, and improve community safety.

By the Province's own analysis, the benefits outweigh the cost.



Post-interconnector waterfront improvements

Impacts

From supporting the development of major projects through the region to encouraging destination development and improving quality of life for local residents, this project stands as a transformative force – its ripple effects reaching across the community, region, and beyond.

Economy

CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the Interconnector is expected to generate **\$310.6 million in GDP for British Columbia** and create **2,546** direct, indirect and induced jobs.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

\$155.59 million will be saved in travel time, safety and vehicle operating cost savings. These benefits are critical to driving the regional economy as they accrue to businesses and workers around the region and across the province.

Better connected businesses, suppliers and customers reduce transportation costs, improve supply chain efficiency and create opportunities for domestic and international trade by enhancing the connection between the province's two major ports and major industrial zones in Prince George and Kamloops.

SMALL BUSINESS

A more vibrant downtown with direct, safe connectivity to the waterfront would unlock new investment by the private sector that would bring new businesses that creating **new jobs and household income**.

Business Case

The project will generate incremental benefits of **\$281.6 million** versus the cost of not proceeding with the project of **\$243.6 million** (Binnie 2020). Travel time savings, safety, and avoided catastrophic failure will save the province **\$38.0 million** in net present value, and has a benefit cost ratio of 1.16. It is financially sound to proceed with the construction of a four-lane Interconnector.

Indigenous

ACHIEVEMENT OF RECONCILIATION OBJECTIVES

The project budget includes **\$32.7 million** for First Nations consultation and accommodations which supports the Province's commitment to DRIPA and reconciliation objectives.

MOTT also supports Indigenous employment and business development by requiring highway contractors to hire Indigenous workers and source materials from Indigenous businesses.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The project would improve safety conditions for Indigenous housing units downtown, including Stepping Stone on Front Street, operated by Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society. Stepping Stone was built for people of Indigenous, Metis and Inuit ancestry who are living drug and alcohol free.

Socio-community

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation would advance along the Interconnector route, improving connections from North Star Road into downtown and up to the Two Mile Flat industrial zone. These areas have been identified as needing significant improvements in Quesnel's Active Transportation Plan in order to make **active transportation a more viable and attractive option for a wider range of people and trips.**

DOWNTOWN PROPERTY VALUES

The City expects to see an additional **\$517,080** annually in property tax revenue with an additional **\$263,800** for other levels of government due to increased desirability and investment in commercial properties along Front Street and Carson Avenue. This represents a 4% increase over total property tax revenue in Quesnel for 2024.

ROAD SAFETY

The Interconnector would dramatically reduce pedestrian/vehicle incidents in downtown and allow placement of safer transportation infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Currently, the highest collision areas and associated insurance claims in the downtown come from the Highway 97 corridor. High collision areas would be eliminated and modern road safety design on the new route would ensure an overall reduction in crashes and casualties.

WATERFRONT ACCESS AND USE

The Interconnector enables implementation of key elements in the City's Waterfront Plan. Crosswalks, bike lanes, and on-street parking improve connectivity and encourage economic activity and entrepreneurship. The Waterfront Plan is key to Quesnel's destination development, supporting provincial goals for **visitor dispersion while increasing community vibrancy.**

Environment

GHG EMISSIONS

4,250 tonnes per year of GHGs will be saved mostly in the form of carbon dioxide, but also nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons. The Interconnector will lead to reduced fuel consumption with fewer delays, idling, and shorter travel distance.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality will improve with a more even flow of traffic, reduced travel distances, and less brake dust due to removal of controlled intersections along the route.

NOISE

There will be less vehicle noise by removing heavy truck traffic and the noise of braking and accelerating at stop lights. This will create a healthier and more peaceful environment and enhances well-being and overall quality of life.

VISUALS

Investments in revitalization, beautification, and public art can be realized once the Interconnector is complete. Trees, walkways, reduced traffic volumes and mitigated light pollution from vehicles will positively impact roadside properties.

DANGEROUS GOODS

All non-local dangerous goods passing through Quesnel would be diverted to the Interconnector route, significantly improving overall environmental and health safety risks in the downtown core.

The Interconnector will address a major safety and mobility concern through the Quesnel downtown core and play a large part in ensuring reliable and efficient movement of people and goods through Quesnel in the province.

-Business Case Evaluation Drafted by Binnie Consulting for MOTT, 2020



Design development completed in 2018

Call to action

The City of Quesnel, local governments around the region, industry and community partners call on the Province of British Columbia to allocate funds to complete the North-South Interconnector, supporting the prosperity of the province, the region, and the community.

PACKAGE CONTENTS

Reports & Documents:

- Quesnel North-South Interconnector Impact Analysis
- Waterfront Plan
- Active Transportation Plan
- Davie Street Revitalization Plan

Letters of Support:

- Cariboo Regional District
- City of Prince George
- City of Williams Lake
- District of 100 Mile House
- District of Fort St James
- District of Kitimat
- District of Mackenzie
- District of Taylor
- District of Tumbler Ridge
- District of Stewart
- Town of Smithers
- Village of Burns Lake
- Village of Hazelton
- Village of McBride
- Village of Pouce Coupe
- North Central Local Government Association
- Artemis Gold Inc
- Former MLA Coralee Oakes
- CRD Area A Director Mary Sjostrom
- BC Chamber of Commerce
- Quesnel Downtown Association
- 11 contributions from local residents

CONTACT US

Quesnel City Hall
410 Kinchant Street
Quesnel, BC, V2J 7J5
250-992-2111
www.quesnel.ca

Joel McKay
City Manager
250-991-7453
jmckay@quesnel.ca