



REPORT TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

PRESENTED: MARCH 27, 2006 - SPECIAL MEETING
FROM: ENGINEERING DIVISION
SUBJECT: RAIL ISSUES IN LANGLEY

REPORT: 06-55
FILE: 0480-20

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council receive the "Rail Issues in Langley" report for information, and

That Council authorize the Mayor to meet with the Federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, P.C., M.P. and continue to meet with the BC Provincial Minister of Transportation, The Honourable Kevin Falcon, regarding "Rail Issues in Langley"; and further

That Council authorize "Rail Issues in Langley" presentations to be offered to the GVRD and TransLink Boards; and further

That Council authorize "Rail Issues to Roberts Bank" presentations be offered to the municipal Councils of the City of Surrey, City of Langley and District of Delta.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Two significant publications relating to rail issues in Langley have been received recently by the Township:

1. Langley Rail Corridor Task Force
 - Facilitator's Final Report (Attachment A)
2. Study of Current and Projected Rail Safety of Grade Crossings in the Township and City of Langley
 - Lindsay Morris Consulting Services

Both these documents draw similar (almost identical) conclusions:

- Rail-road conflicts require measures to deal with current congestion issues.
- Lessons of history indicate a long term solution integrating national, provincial and municipal transportation systems is needed.
- Road-rail conflicts will be avoided or mitigated and better managed through dialogue and joint planning.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to share the results of the above-noted rail issue publications with Council.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

In the duration of the Task Force, May to December 2005, the Federal Government announced the Pacific Gateway Strategy. The Strategy includes up to \$590 million in funding, of which up to \$30 million is indicated for Deltaport road/rail grade separations within the rail corridor extending from Mission/Matsqui to Deltaport; subsequently, Transport Canada has begun to mobilize resources to identify priorities.

Also in the fall of 2005, The Township of Langley, BC, retained Lindsay Morris Consulting Services (1993) to carry out the review of safety issues impacting the grade crossings in the two Langleys resulting from:

- (1) introduction of larger trains, and
- (2) increased train volume, and

to scan for other locations within BC with similar logistical issues.

Lindsay Morris Consulting Services is a consulting firm specializing in Canadian rail regulatory issues as they relate to road/railway grade crossing safety assessments, crossing surfaces, automatic protection, anti whistling at crossings and railway charges for crossing maintenance and construction. A copy of the key findings from this report are attached (Attachment B).

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Clearly, there is broader acknowledgement of the validity and urgency of Langleys' rail/road conflicts than a year ago, and senior governments have made resources available toward finding and implementing a short term (mitigation) solution and have acknowledged the need for long term integrated solutions.

To translate the foregoing into completed construction will take time, but it will take less time if the City and the Township continue in this combined effort to encourage senior governments' priority attention.

Possible strategic actions for Council to consider at this time are:

- building relationships with key decision makers and persons who can influence them
- engage others who can help us with the above;
 - o GVRD municipalities, especially Surrey and the City of Langley
 - o Emergency services
 - o Individuals, businesses and organizations
 - o Offer to be an active partner with senior governments

Respectfully submitted,

Colin S. Wright
DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING
for
ENGINEERING DIVISION

ATTACHMENT A Langley Rail Corridor Task Force Facilitator's Final Report
ATTACHMENT B Key Findings of Study of Current and Projected Rail Safety of Grade Crossings in the Township and City of Langley

Facilitator's Final Report
Langley Rail Corridor Task Force

Don Wright
Task Force Facilitator
February, 2006

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Executive Summary

The Task Force was established in June, 2005 to explore solutions to the issues resulting from the road-rail interaction in the "Langley Corridor." Membership on the Task Force consisted of senior representatives from:

- City of Langley
- Township of Langley
- Vancouver Port Authority
- Canadian Pacific Railway
- CN
- Southern Railway of British Columbia
- Transport Canada
- British Columbia Ministry of Transportation
- Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (Translink)
- Greater Vancouver Gateway Council.

In addition, Mark Warawa, Member of Parliament, and a representative of the federal Minister of Industry participated in the Task Force.

The Task Force agreed on a package of measures that was feasible and would lead to a significant improvement over the status quo. That package consisted of:

1. A plan for road network improvements that would reduce road-rail conflict, and significantly improve the flow of road traffic relative to what would be the case in the absence of those improvements. Two priority improvements were identified:
 - i. the 204 Street overpass; and
 - ii. realignment of Mufford Crescent/ 64 Ave / Highway 10, with an overpass over the rail line and complementary improvements to the arterial road system.
2. Funding for the road network improvements.

The costs of these road network improvements will be shared by the municipalities, Translink, the provincial and federal governments. In addition, the Vancouver Port Authority has committed to participate financially in rail crossing upgrades in the Langley corridor

In October, 2005 the federal government announced the Pacific Gateway Strategy. Part of that strategy is the provision of up to \$30 million for the construction of new road/rail grade separation within the rail corridor extending from Mission/Matsqui to DeltaPort. The Gateway Strategy

called for a study of the road/rail interface on the entire line from Mission/Matsqui to DeltaPort. Transport Canada expects to begin that study shortly and complete it within 2006.

The precise sharing of costs will emerge from discussion amongst the identified parties as the Transport Canada rail corridor study is undertaken and as planning for the Mufford Crescent/ 64 Ave / Highway 10 project proceeds.

3. Ongoing dialogue amongst the municipalities, the railways and the Vancouver Port Authority to facilitate the management and mitigation of road-rail interaction issues.
4. Continuation of the development of a longer-term vision for, and the planning of the transportation system for the Greater Vancouver area. Transport Canada, the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Translink should ensure that planning processes are sufficiently mandated and co-coordinated so that the required planning is accomplished without unnecessary duplication.

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Facilitator's Final Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary record of the work of the Langley Rail Corridor Task Force over the course of its operation between June and December, 2005.

Composition and Purpose of the Task Force

The Task Force was established in June, 2005 to explore what solutions there were to the issues resulting from the road-rail interaction in the "Langley Corridor," particularly in light of projected increases for both road and rail traffic. Membership on the Task Force consisted of senior representatives from:

- City of Langley
- Township of Langley
- Vancouver Port Authority
- Canadian Pacific Railway
- CN
- Southern Railway of British Columbia
- Transport Canada
- British Columbia Ministry of Transportation
- Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (Translink)
- Greater Vancouver Gateway Council.

In addition, Mark Warawa, Member of Parliament, and a representative of the federal Minister of Industry participated in the Task Force.

Understanding about Participation in the Task Force

It was agreed at the first meeting that organizations were participating in the Task Force because they had a shared interest in minimizing road-rail conflict, but that participation was voluntary, and no organization was compelled to participate, nor did the Task Force have any authority to compel any participating organization to take any particular action or make any particular commitment. Any decisions, actions or commitments would be based on the consent of the organization responsible.

This is very important to emphasize. The Task Force process was not a negotiation in which party(ies) tried to compel other party(ies) to take particular actions or make particular commitments at risk of some adverse consequence. Rather, it was a process which attempted to discover the "maximum amount of common agreement" that could be achieved.

Agreed to Objective

The Task Force defined its objective as follows:

To address the short and long term impacts of the growing rail and road traffic in the rail corridor of the Langley communities. The objective of the task force is to have a plan by the end of 2005 which identifies cost-effective measures, along with strategies for funding and municipal planning, to support a safe, liveable community and an efficient transportation network.

The Lessons of History

The Task Force had an extensive discussion of what we have learned from history. The lessons, as agreed to, were summarized as follows:

The problem has arisen from growth – growth in the number of people who have sought affordable housing in the liveable communities in the Langleys; growth in the businesses which serve the shopping needs of the greater Langley area; and growth in the demand for goods to be shipped between Asia and North America.

This growth has been generally a good thing – affording a higher quality of life and greater economic opportunities for people in the Langleys, elsewhere in British Columbia and in the rest of Canada. The interaction of the growth has, however, created congestion problems.

In retrospect, planning processes might have anticipated these congestion problems and put in place measures to manage and mitigate them. Perhaps the ability to do this was constrained by the large number of parties, with different objectives and responsibilities, involved.

Regardless of the reasons, we have inherited the situation as it is. All of the parties are here. All of the parties recognize that they contribute to the problem. All of the parties share an interest in a healthy economy and liveable communities. All of the parties are willing to participate in finding solutions.

The solutions will require measures to deal with current congestion issues, but should also reflect the lessons of history – by taking a long-term orientation that anticipates and avoids or mitigates growing congestion problems in the future.

Solutions

A wide range of possible solutions were considered. The maximum common agreement was that there was a "package" of measures that was feasible and would lead to a significant improvement over the status quo. The components of that package consisted of:

- i. a plan for road network improvements that would reduce road-rail conflict and significantly improve the flow of road traffic relative to what would be the case in the absence of those improvements;
- ii. a funding framework for those road network improvements;
- iii. ongoing dialogue amongst the municipalities, the railways and the Port Authority to manage and mitigate rail-road conflict issues; and
- iv. a broader and longer-term planning process than the Task Force was able to undertake given its composition, mandate and timelines.

Plan for Road Network Improvements

A planning process, with participation from the municipal, provincial and federal governments and Translink was established to identify priorities for road network improvements. Two priority improvements were identified:

- iii. the 204 Street overpass; and
- iv. realignment of Mufford Crescent/ 64 Ave / Highway 10 (hereinafter abbreviated M/64/10), with an overpass over the rail line and complementary improvements to the arterial road system.

This plan has been finalized and is reproduced in the Appendix.

A contract was signed in November to proceed with the 204 Street overpass project.

The next stage in the M/64/10 project is for the Township to proceed, in consultation with the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Translink to the next stage of the planning process for this project. In particular, to develop more definition around:

- scope;
- road alignment;
- preliminary cost estimates; and
- identification of benefits.

This stage of the planning process should take into account the need to obtain Agricultural Land Reserve Commission approval for any removals of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve necessitated by the project. In particular, a common understanding amongst the parties (the Township, the Province and Translink) about road network changes in the corridor should be presented to the Commission.

Funding Framework for the Road Network Improvements

In October the federal government announced the Pacific Gateway Strategy. Part of that strategy is the provision of up to \$30 million for the construction of new road/rail grade separation within the rail corridor extending from Mission/Matsqui to DeltaPort. It is important to note that the focus brought to this issue by the Task Force, and the efforts by certain members of the Task Force, contributed to the federal government's decision that it was in the national interest to mitigate the road-rail conflict in the corridor. It is also important to note that the Pacific Gateway Strategy was supported by all parties which currently have British Columbia representation in the federal parliament.

The Gateway Strategy called for a study of the road/rail interface on the entire line from Mission/Matsqui to DeltaPort. Transport Canada expects to begin that study shortly and complete it within 2006. It is expected that the study will identify priorities for grade separations as the basis for allocating the federal funds to these priority upgrades. It is expected that the study will utilize information already available, such as that generated in the municipal/provincial/Translink planning process described in the previous section.

Until this study is completed, it is not possible to be more definitive about how much federal funding is available for the major road improvement projects identified. Furthermore, more work will need to be done, as part of the planning process for the M/64/10 project, to quantify the local, regional, and provincial benefits of that project as the basis for negotiations for funding contributions from the Township, Province and Translink.

In addition to the federal, provincial, municipal and Translink funding, the Vancouver Port Authority has committed to participate financially in rail crossing upgrades in the Langley corridor.

The Task Force was not able to facilitate any more definition of funding by the end of 2005 than that outlined above. More definition of this will emerge from discussions amongst the identified parties as the Transport Canada rail corridor study is undertaken, and as the planning for the M/64/10 project proceeds.

Ongoing Dialogue amongst the Municipalities, Railways and the Vancouver Port Authority

Despite the fact that the road network improvements identified above will significantly improve the situation, there will continue to be road-rail conflict issues in the Langley corridor. The municipalities, the railways and the Vancouver Port Authority will continue to have a shared interest in managing and mitigating these issues. These parties agreed that it would be valuable to continue an ongoing dialogue directed towards this end.

Broader and Longer-Term Planning Processes

One of the questions that the Task Force wrestled with was the question of the scope and time horizon of the exercise. Given the circumstances, the Task Force decided to focus pragmatically on what could be achieved in the near term. The road network improvements identified will provide a significant improvement in road traffic flow, and a significant reduction in road-rail conflict, as compared to leaving the road network as it currently is.

There remains a sense, however, that these improvements do not represent a full long-term (e.g. 50 years) "vision" for the road-rail network in the Langley corridor.

There are two reasons why the Task Force did not pursue this longer-term vision:

- i. at a pragmatic level, there was a sense that the opportunity to get agreement and definition around the medium-term improvements might be missed if the Task Force did not focus on them; and
- ii. a realization that the scope of a long-term vision exercise was necessarily broader than just the Langley corridor.

Some discussion of this second reason is useful. The issues in the Langley corridor are symptomatic of the "problems of success" that we face throughout the lower mainland in British Columbia. People continue to want to move into the lower mainland because of the economic opportunities and the attractive quality of life there. Canada as a whole, including the lower mainland, benefits from the lower mainland's role as Canada's gateway to the Pacific, and there are opportunities to increase these benefits by capitalizing on the strong growth in Asian economies. Taken together, however, both of these developments will lead to increased road and rail traffic.

It is worthwhile to repeat again one of the lessons of history, noted above, that, going forward, we should take a long-term orientation that anticipates and avoids or mitigates growing congestion problems in the future.

Accordingly, the Task Force recommends that the ongoing development of a longer-term vision and planning for the transportation system in the Greater Vancouver area continue. Such a process will need to integrate the plans for the national, provincial, regional and local transportation systems.

There are several planning processes already in existence, or proposed, which are directed at this, in whole or in part. Transport Canada, the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Translink should ensure that these processes are sufficiently mandated and co-coordinated so that the required planning is accomplished without unnecessary duplication.

A key lesson from the Task Force is that the overall planning process(es) must have “two-way integration” with the municipalities’ planning processes – the broader planning process must be informed by the development plans for the municipalities; at the same time, the development plans for the municipalities must be informed by the long-term transportation plans for the Greater Vancouver area.

Concluding Comments

While significant ongoing work is required, the Task Force has agreed on a framework for significant improvements in road traffic flow in the Langley corridor in the future.

Road-rail conflict will be mitigated and better managed if the parties continue their dialogue and engage in joint planning processes that look to the future

Appendix
Summary of Road Network Plan

Summary of Road Network Plan for Langley Rail Corridor February 7, 2006

Introduction

In 2005, the Township of Langley and City of Langley raised concern that additional rail traffic resulting from a proposed expansion of DeltaPort would be detrimental to their local communities. As a response to this concern, a task force was established to address the impacts of growing rail and road traffic along the rail corridor in the Langley communities. A technical working group was convened to review previous studies, develop a plan for road improvements in the corridor and propose priorities for task force consideration. The work was limited to the area along the rail corridor between 196th and 224th Streets and between Highway 1 and 56th Avenue.

Representatives of Transport Canada, the Ministry of Transportation, TransLink, the Township of Langley and the City of Langley all participated in this working group. The group held two workshops during the period from October to December 2005 and concluded with a final meeting in January 2006. The group mostly relied on the results of the previous Ward Study, but conducted some additional analysis to refine and validate their work. This report is the output of the group's efforts.

Problem Definition

The railway corridor passes through the Langley communities on a route parallel to Highway 10 using a right of way that was created in 1906 for an electric tram system. As it passes through the City of Langley, the railway runs along the south side of Highway 10 (Langley Bypass). Where Highway 10 turns onto Glover Road, the railway crosses the highway and runs parallel to it, on the west side, in the Township of Langley.

Along with crossing the Highway, the railway also crosses numerous local roads at grade, severing the communities when long trains are passing through. Significant traffic congestion occurs along, and at crossings of Highway 10, and on 200th Street, the Fraser Highway and other roads during peak travel periods and when trains are moving through the corridor. There is also concern that trains crossing or blocking roads will interfere with emergency vehicle access. Highway 10 operates as an urban arterial and is part of the provincial disaster response route.

Working Group Findings

Based on the results of Ward's Study, the working group identified the following proposed road network improvements as being required and sorted them according to priority for action. These improvements constitute the basis for the recommended road improvement plan for the area. The plan complements and expands on the Regions Major Road Network and assumes that there will be a new interchange at Highway #1 and 216 Street. A map of the proposed plan is attached.

Two road-rail grade separations were identified as being needed in the short-term. The longer-term elements are local network improvements that will allow the full benefits of the two grade separations to be realized.

Short-Term:

1. 204th Street Overpass:

Construction of a 4-lane overpass on 204th Street in the City of Langley, over both Highway 10 and the railway line (already under construction). The project includes accommodation for cyclists and pedestrians and widening of Duncan Way and 204th Street. This improvement will provide an alternate north-south route to 200th Street.

The budget for this project is \$36.9 million. It is indicated as A on the attached map.

2. Mufford Crescent/64th Avenue Overpass:

Construction of an overpass, over both Highway 10 and the railway line, connecting Mufford Crescent and 64th Avenue on the west side to 64th Avenue and 216th Street on the east side. This would result in an alternate east-west route to the Langley Bypass.

The estimated cost of this improvement is \$39 - 50 million. It is indicated as C on the attached map.

Longer Term (5-10 years):

3. Widen/Extend 62nd Avenue east of 201st Street

Widening of 62nd Avenue to four lanes between 201st Street and 204th Street and extending 62nd Avenue past 204th Street as a two lane road to join with Mufford Crescent/64th Avenue.

The estimated cost of this improvement is \$4 - 6 million. It is indicated as D on the attached map.

4. Highway 1/216th Street Interchange

Currently, there is no interchange at 216th Street, which is centrally located between the two existing Langley interchanges at 200th and 232nd streets. 216th Street has been identified as an important north-south municipal arterial road and a full-movement interchange is contemplated at this location. In addition to serving anticipated growth in the area, the interchange would also provide some relief to the busy 200th and 232nd Street Interchanges.

A cost estimate for this project is currently not available. It is indicated as E on the attached map.

5. Widen 216th Street south of Highway 1

Widening of 216th Street to four lanes between Highway 1 and 80th Avenue. The timing of this project is linked to construction of the 216th Street/Highway 1 Interchange.

Estimated cost range is \$1 - 2.5 million with land acquisition costs being approximately 30% of the overall cost.

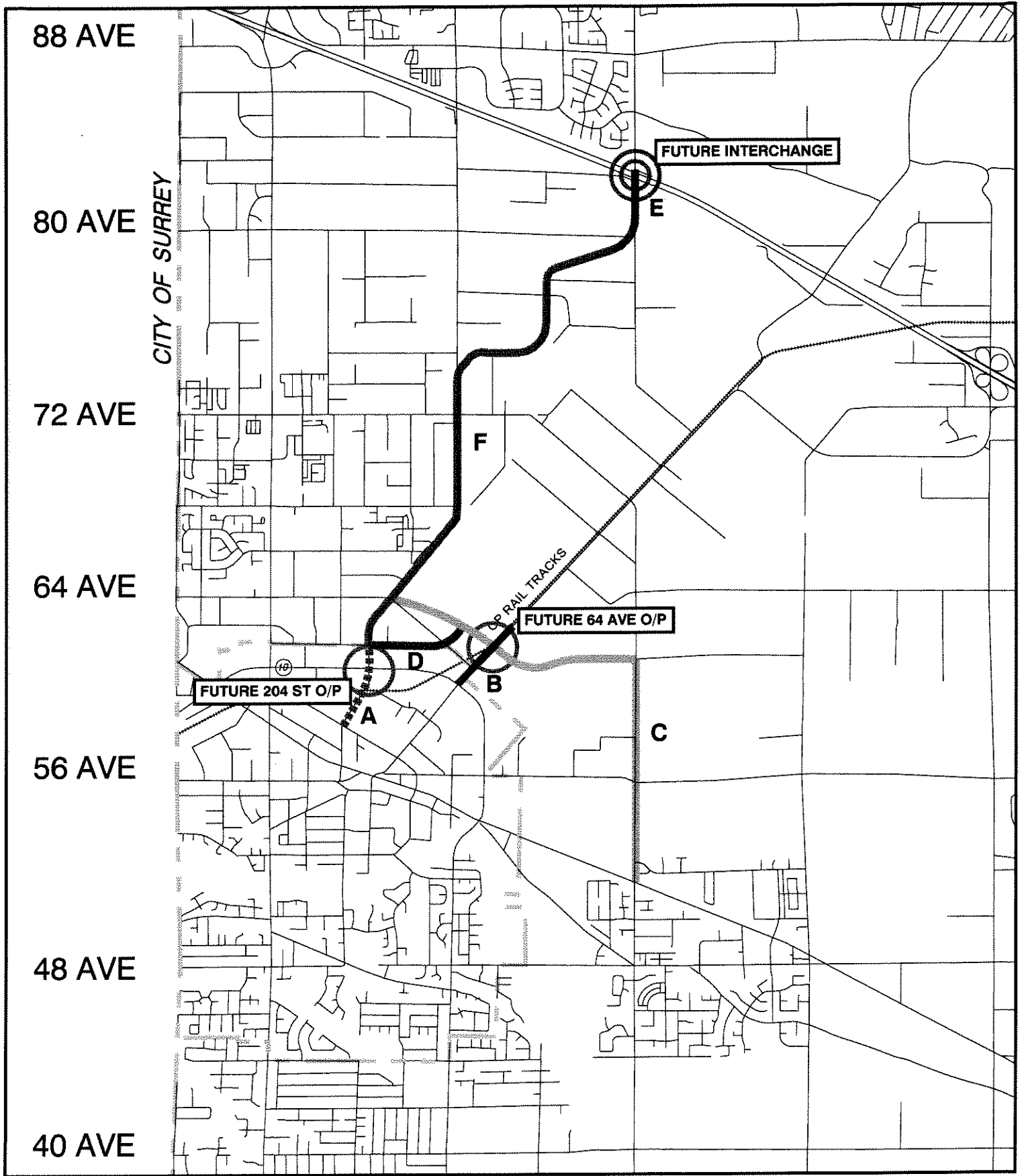
Shown as E on the attached map.

6. 216th Street Connector/Willowbrook Connector.

Construction of a 4-lane connector between 74B Avenue/208th Street and 89th Avenue/216th Street, and widening of 204th and 208th Street to four lanes between 62nd Avenue and 74B Avenue.

This project would provide significant connectivity to the network after completion of the 204th Overpass and completion of the 216th Street/Highway 1 Interchange.

Estimated cost range is approximately \$18 – 22 million for the connector and \$15 – 18 Million for road widening, with land acquisition costs being approximately 30% of the overall cost.



FUTURE ROAD NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

- ⊙ PROPOSED INTERCHANGE
- PROPOSED HIGHWAY OVERPASS

Key Findings

of

Study of Current and Projected Rail Safety of Grade Crossings in the Township and City of Langley

1. Public Safety & Emergency Response

Rail traffic throughout the Langleys will interfere with and significantly restrict the ability of emergency vehicles to respond to fires or medical emergencies. With trains long enough to close a crossing for more than five minutes creating traffic delays lasting much longer than that, a regular train movement through Langley will severely disrupt emergency response effectiveness. Increased crossing conflicts will result in a much greater probability of accidents and incidents. Lives are at risk every time a train travels through the municipalities.

2. Liveable Community

Increasing train volumes, combined with longer trains and increased weight of engines and cars means Langley will suffer with increased intensity and duration of noise and vibration issues. The resultant degradation of the quality of the neighboring properties will impact property values and increase health issues related to sleep, comfort and security. A liveable community has noise levels less than 70 decibels before noise significantly degrades the quality of life. Train horns cause 97 decibels and the train itself is well over 80 decibels.

3. Delays, Gridlock, Environmental & Economic Impacts

A long delay at crossings increases costs to drivers and commerce and has a direct and very significant effect on community safety as emergency services will be severely disrupted at the time of greatest need. Conflicts already exceed even the most conservative warrants for grade separations. To consider doubling the container traffic through the Langleys without any mitigating safety works is neglectful and counterproductive to the nation's economy, the transportation and shipping industry as well as the communities that it traverses.

Trains passing through Langley typically occupy a road crossing at grade for three and a half to over four minutes. Long container trains will occupy the crossings longer. In fact, container trains will simultaneously occupy five crossings at once and during peak traffic periods, effectively stop all traffic in the Willowbrook Town Centre area of the Langleys. For every minute that a train blocks the crossing, there is a five-minute multiplier effect on the traffic resulting in queuing and gridlock during peak traffic hours.

Key Findings

of

Study of Current and Projected Rail Safety of Grade Crossings in the Township and City of Langley

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4. Call For Strategic Integrated, Durable Action

It is time for the governments to find a total holistic solution, rather than single element "quick fixes". The current rail solution to increased container demand is to operate longer trains more frequently on existing infrastructure while ignoring the negative effect upon communities.

The 1968 Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board Brief recommends the use of the Fraser River Industrial Rail corridor to Roberts Bank as the appropriate route. Contrary to this study recommending the relocation of the rail line outside of the Langley's, a quick fix approach saw a small rail detour constructed, which has not proven effective and did not truly address the issues. As a result, we face the same issues today, albeit magnified to a great intensity, of negative community impact and significance.

Ignoring mitigation of safety issues prior to accepting the current levels of rail traffic and the projected levels will result in a disservice to the community and national and regional economic development.

If all parties can come together and address the public safety, emergency response, environmental, liveability, rail and business efficiency issues caused by increased rail traffic in the Langleys, it will become a testament for future areas facing similar issues.