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The Highway 1 at Mountain Highway interchange project includes four ramps, a new, wider structure with signalized intersections, and realignment of Mountain Highway to Brooksbank Avenue at Keith Road. IMAGE SUPPLIED

HIGHWAY UPDATE: MOUNTAIN INTERCHANGE

District awaits decision on Lynn Creek bridge

Feds, province asked to prioritize bridge replacement

BRENT RICHTER
 brichter@nsnews.com

Basic design work and public consultation for a \$50-million redesign of the Mountain Highway interchange is now largely complete, but we are still waiting to hear whether the preferred option involving a new bridge over Lynn Creek eastbound on-ramp for Lynn Valley residents will be funded.

"We're in a stage right now where we're trying to finalize the design – that whatever is built meets the needs of both North Vancouver district and those that are travelling on the freeway. It's a very difficult section of the road because you've got all these on- and off-ramps," said David Stuart, District of North Vancouver chief administrative officer.

The current design features a new four-lane Mountain Highway overpass connecting with Brooksbank Avenue, a southbound exit lane and off-ramp from the Cut, a new northbound on-ramp to the Cut from Mountain Highway and some painted bike lanes and

controlled intersections.

What it doesn't have, many residents pointed out at recent public meetings on the project, is an eastbound on-ramp for residents coming down Mountain Highway from Lynn Valley.

"That's not the ideal situation but the challenge is the ministry cannot put that left-turn or eastbound access route in without widening the orange highway bridge because you'll need a merge lane that runs several hundred metres," said district Mayor Richard Walton.

That would mean installing a new, wider Highway 1 bridge over Lynn Creek. That's something the province anticipates doing but not for 10 years, at least. Whether or not it can be included in the interchange project will depend on federal and provincial funding.

Walton said North Vancouver's Liberal MPs have shown great interest in coming through with their portion of the money. "They're in Ottawa, they're still working on this, trying to co-ordinate things and asking us questions, trying to make sure they're moving things forward at their end. It's optimistic."

At the request of district staff, the province is also now looking to move the bridge replacement up in the schedule, ahead of a proposed redesign of the Main

Street/Dollarton Highway interchange, Stuart said.

Although not strictly part of this project, the district and province are now also looking to add a new southbound lane on Lynn Valley road under Highway 1 with an aim to better moving the flow of traffic during rush hour, Walton said.

One other group that's not 100 per cent sold on the current design is cyclists. The ministry is scheduling an extra stakeholder meeting with them to see if the design can be improved, Walton said.

"That being said, I think there's recognition that what's being proposed now is a significant improvement to what is there right now," Stuart added.

Walton urged patience while the blockbuster concrete and asphalt project rolls out over the next number of years.

"I think what folks would like is some instant improvement but because there are so many connected pieces ... you really need to be finished Phase 2, which is the Fern Street overpass realignment, which is still very much in the design phase, before you're going to see the kind of fluidity that all the residents in the area would like," he said. "But the train has left the station right now. That's the critical thing."