

north shore news

Hwy 1 upgrades announced

\$100-million makeover for approaches to Ironworkers Memorial

Maria Spitale-Leisk / North Shore News

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Cursing in stop-and-go traffic on The Cut could become a thing of the past after 2020, with a financial commitment from all levels of government to ease congestion at the north end of the Ironworkers Memorial Second Narrows Crossing.

A service road at the north-end bridgehead was the scene Friday of a \$100-million funding announcement for the Lower Lynn Corridor Improvement project - part of a three-piece, \$140-million overhaul of the interchanges in the area.

Political leaders from all levels of government - including North Vancouver Mayor Richard Walton, MLA Jane Thornthwaite and MP Andrew Saxton - were on hand for the unveiling of the Lower Lynn corridor redesign.

But it was Minister of Industry James Moore that a couple of protesters who hijacked the press conference were there to see. Dressed in white haz-mat suits and dust masks, the protesters shoved pieces of oilcovered driftwood in the faces of Moore and Saxton, demanding answers from the federal government to last week's fuel spill in

English Bay.

There were 10 minutes of awkward exchange between the protesters and Moore before the politicians returned to the original item at hand.

Moore went on to announce the interchange project would be eligible for \$34.1 million in federal funding under the New Building Canada Plan in B.C. The remaining \$65.9-

million balance will be cost-shared by the province and the District of North Vancouver.

Among the improvements announced under the project, which is expected to be completed by 2020: a Crown Street cycling and pedestrian overpass, a new Dollarton Highway on-ramp overpass, a new bus signal, and intersection improvements for the Highway 1 off-ramp at Main Street and Seymour Boulevard connector. "To put it in plainer terms. .. it means that what has over time become a bit of a tangled mess of off-ramps here on the north side of the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge will be cleaned up with state-of-the-art infrastructure that will be wider, that will be safer and more conducive to public transit. ..," said Moore.

B.C. Transportation Minister Todd Stone talked about the positive economic impacts that will come with easing the Second Narrows congestion.

"We know how important the movement of people and goods is to the local economy and indeed the provincial economy," said Stone. "We are also aware of the need to reduce congestion to allow business, trade and tourism to thrive."

Walton said he was pleased the need to replace the Ironworkers bridge interchanges is being recognized by the province

and federal government, while Thornthwaite also shared that sentiment.

"It's going to positively influence everybody on the North Shore, particularly in North Vancouver," said Thornthwaite.

Last fall a total of \$50 million was secured from the three levels of government for a reconfiguration of the Mountain Highway interchanges, aimed at easing the bottleneck at that approach to the bridge.

Under the conceptual design, Mountain Highway will have a new four-lane overpass, linking it directly with Brooksbank Avenue, plus new on-ramps onto the Cut, northbound and southbound.

Meanwhile, a new off-ramp from the southbound Cut will connect easily to the Fern Street overpass via the widened Keith Road bridge, which is currently being constructed.

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