

B.C. Budget 2020: Transportation and land-use plan coming for Fraser Valley

The budget also includes money to continue work on the George Massey Tunnel replacement project, including safety upgrades and planning.

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The B.C. government will lead a transportation and development study in the Fraser Valley, where local government leaders have called for more investment to improve how people and goods get around in the region.

The goal, according to information released on Tuesday as part of the province's 2020 budget (<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/b-c-budget-2020-b-c-finance-presents-stay-the-course-budget>), is to use findings and recommendations from the study to come up with a strategy for the Fraser Valley that covers transportation, development and housing, while taking national and provincial trade corridors into account.

There were few details available, but the project appears to be part of a larger push by the province to make sure its investments are aligned and integrated with regional development plans, reduce congestion and promote livable communities.

"It's critical that we ensure that goods and commuters able to move, and commuters are able to move," said Finance Minister Carole James.

The study will be done in partnership with transit authorities TransLink and B.C. Transit, and there will be engagement with local governments, Indigenous communities, the public, and others.

Chilliwack Coun. Jason Lum, who chairs the Fraser Valley Regional District, said he welcomes any opportunity to talk to the province about improving transportation in the region — particularly if there is a chance funding could be involved.

However, he said he believes the district has a lot to offer because they run the regional transit system and have authority over land use.

"I would respectfully consider us more than just a stakeholder to be engaged at some point. We should be driving this process, and I think we would be very valuable to be at the table," Lum said.

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The budget lays out the province's transportation capital spending for the next five years, a change from previous budgets that have covered only three years. During that time, the province expects to spend \$9.2 billion on transportation infrastructure.

Major projects include the Pattullo Bridge replacement (<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/pattullo-bridge-contract-awarded-to-fraser-crossing-partners>) (\$1.2 billion over five years), Millennium Line SkyTrain extension along Broadway to Arbutus (<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/province-hosts-open-house-on-broadway-subway-project>) in Vancouver (\$1.5 billion), four-laning Highway 1 to the Alberta border (\$1.2 billion), adding high-occupancy vehicle lanes to Highway 1 between 216th and 264th Streets in Langley, and upgrades to Highway 91, Highway 17, and Deltaport.

The budget also contains funding for work on the George Massey Tunnel replacement (<https://vancouversun.com/news/politics/horgan-insists-hes-still-open-to-ideas-for-replacing-massey-tunnel>) project, with immediate safety improvements to the existing tunnel, planning and design for interim congestion relief and transit priority projects, and planning, engineering and Indigenous consultation on the replacement.

Upgrades to the existing tunnel include lighting, drainage, paving, replacing signs and safety systems.

Specific dollar amounts for the safety upgrades and planning are not included in the budget, but rather included under the header "transportation and trade network reliability." The plan is to spend \$1.9 billion over five years in that area, including \$314 million in 2020/2021.

Money has not yet been allocated for construction of a replacement for the tunnel because the province has not yet decided what form that will take. Metro Vancouver mayors have expressed their interest in seeing the river crossing replaced with an eight-lane immersed-tube tunnel (<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/task-force-recommends-new-eight-lane-tube-to-replace-massey-tunnel>).

The province is still conducting public consultation, and James said a business case, which will reveal the scope, budget, delivery and schedule, is expected to be completed later this year.

The government has invested another \$419 million in CleanBC, (<https://vancouversun.com/news/politics/new-bill-mandates-annual-reports-on-b>

c-s-climate-pollution-reduction) its climate-action strategy, which has \$35 million allocated to clean transportation, including charging stations, electrification of public transit and inland ferries, and continuing rebates toward the purchase of electric vehicles and incentives for home and workplace charging stations.

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