



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

FILE: 01-0410-12

August 22, 2025

The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
Province of British Columbia
Via Email: TT.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Farnworth:

Re: Suicide Prevention and Community Safety on the Mission Bridge

On behalf of the City of Mission Council, I am writing to express our continuing concern regarding the safety of the Abbotsford – Mission Highway 11 Bridge (Bridge) and the urgent need for suicide prevention measures.

We acknowledge the Province's recent consideration of crisis line call boxes on the Bridge. While these would be a valuable addition, they cannot substitute for a physical barrier or equivalent intervention. International evidence shows that barriers—including fencing, netting, and other lightweight systems—are the most effective means of preventing suicides at bridge sites.

In response to our previous requests, the Ministry indicated that no further action could be taken because of the Bridge's weight limitations. However, other jurisdictions have implemented innovative, lightweight solutions such as stainless-steel mesh fencing, cantilevered netting, and fiber-reinforced polymer rail extensions on older structures with similar constraints. We, therefore, request that the Ministry consider other options for feasible barrier approaches for the Bridge, and that it collaborate with our engineering staff.

We also emphasize that suicide prevention cannot rely solely on improving infrastructure. Mission Memorial Hospital serves the wider North Fraser region, including the Katzie, Kwantlen, Leq'á:mel, Máthxwi, Semá:th, Sq'éwlets, Sts'ailes, and Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island) First Nations, as well as FVRD Electoral Areas C, F, and G., yet the hospital does not have a mental health or observation unit. Individuals in crisis—whether seeking emergency help voluntarily under Section 20 or when apprehended by police under Section 28 of the *Mental Health Act*—must be transported to Abbotsford. This creates a serious service gap. People

in crisis must cross the Bridge in order to access help and, when they learn that there are few options for them, they return across the Bridge without hope or help. It has proven to be a recipe for disaster.

As a regional hub for the North Fraser, Mission desperately needs locally accessible mental health services.

As our community grows and invests in waterfront and active transportation connections, it is essential that the Bridge remain both safe and functional. The burden of responding to suicide attempts and tragedies has largely fallen on our community—on families, as well as police, fire, and search and rescue personnel. We cannot rely on hope alone. Evidence shows that barriers combined with improved health services save lives.

We, therefore, respectfully ask the Province to:

1. Direct the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to evaluate lightweight barrier systems for the Bridge and provide options for collaborative review with City staff.
2. Work with the Ministry of Health to enhance mental health and crisis response services at Mission Memorial Hospital.
3. Support a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach involving municipal governments, health authorities, local First Nations, and community partners.

We recognize the challenges of working across ministries, but a comprehensive approach is essential. These issues affect our neighbours, our families, and especially our young people. As Mission grows, it is critical that we maintain safe infrastructure, strong connectivity, and accessible mental health care.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with Ministry staff and regional partners to advance this discussion. The City's staff contact for this matter is Jenny Tough, Director of Engineering and Public Works (jenny.tough@mission.ca or 604-820-3739). Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

PAUL HORN

MAYOR

On Behalf of Mission City Council

Cc. The Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Health
Reann Gasper, MLA, Abbotsford – Mission
Lawrence Mok, MLA, Maple Ridge East
Brad Vis, MP, Mission-Matsqui-Abbotsford
Chief George Grace, Katzie First Nation

Chief Marilyn Gabriel, Kwantlen First Nation
Chief Stacey Goulding, Leq'á:mel First Nation
Chief Alice McKay, Máthxwi First Nation
Chief Dalton Silver, Semá:th First Nation
Chief Joseph Chapman, Sq'éwlets First Nation
Chief Chad Paul, Sts'ailes First Nation
Chief Jim Harris, Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island) First Nation
Mayor Sylvia Pranger and Council, District of Kent
Fraser Valley Regional District Board
Dr. Lynn Stevenson, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer, Fraser Health Authority c/o
Opreet Kang, Interim Board Chair, Fraser Health Authority
Yogita Grover, Senior Consultant, Government and Community Relations, Fraser Health Authority
Mission RCMP
Mission Fire Rescue Service
Mission Search and Rescue
Jenny Tough, Director of Engineering and Public Works, City of Mission
City of Mission Council
City of Mission – Regular Council Agenda Correspondence